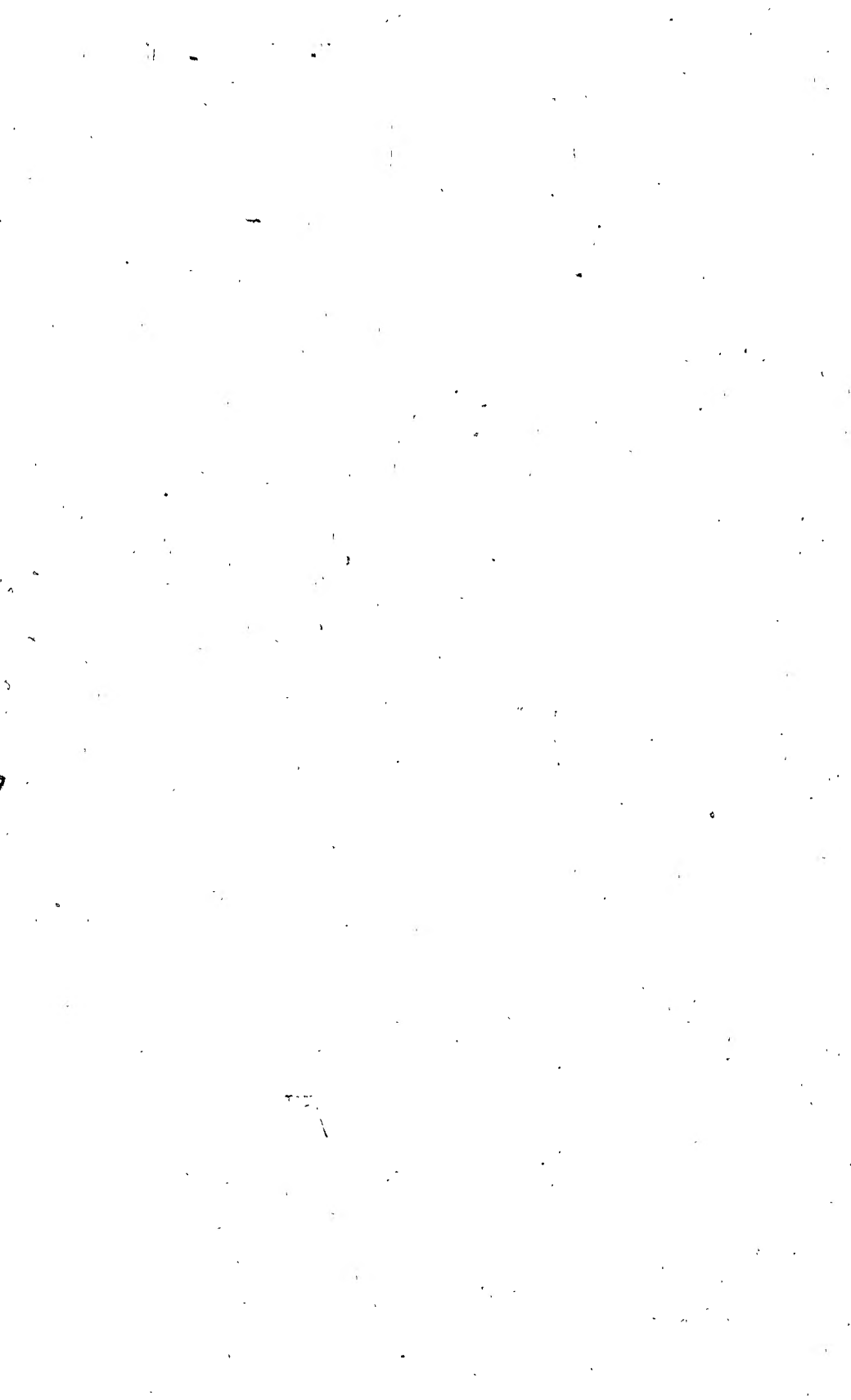


HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC
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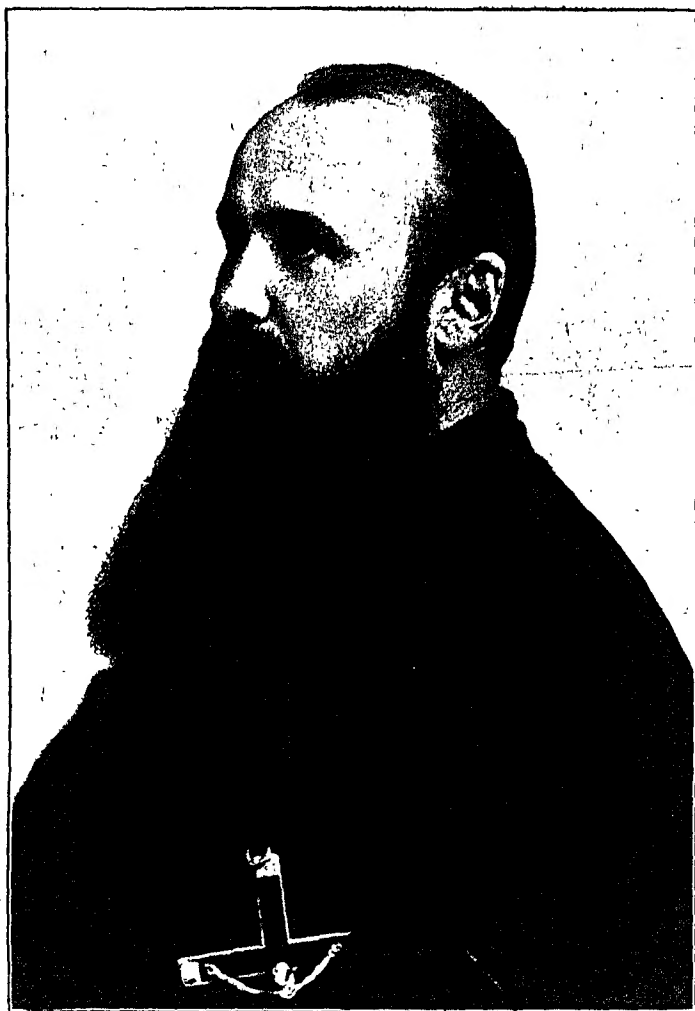
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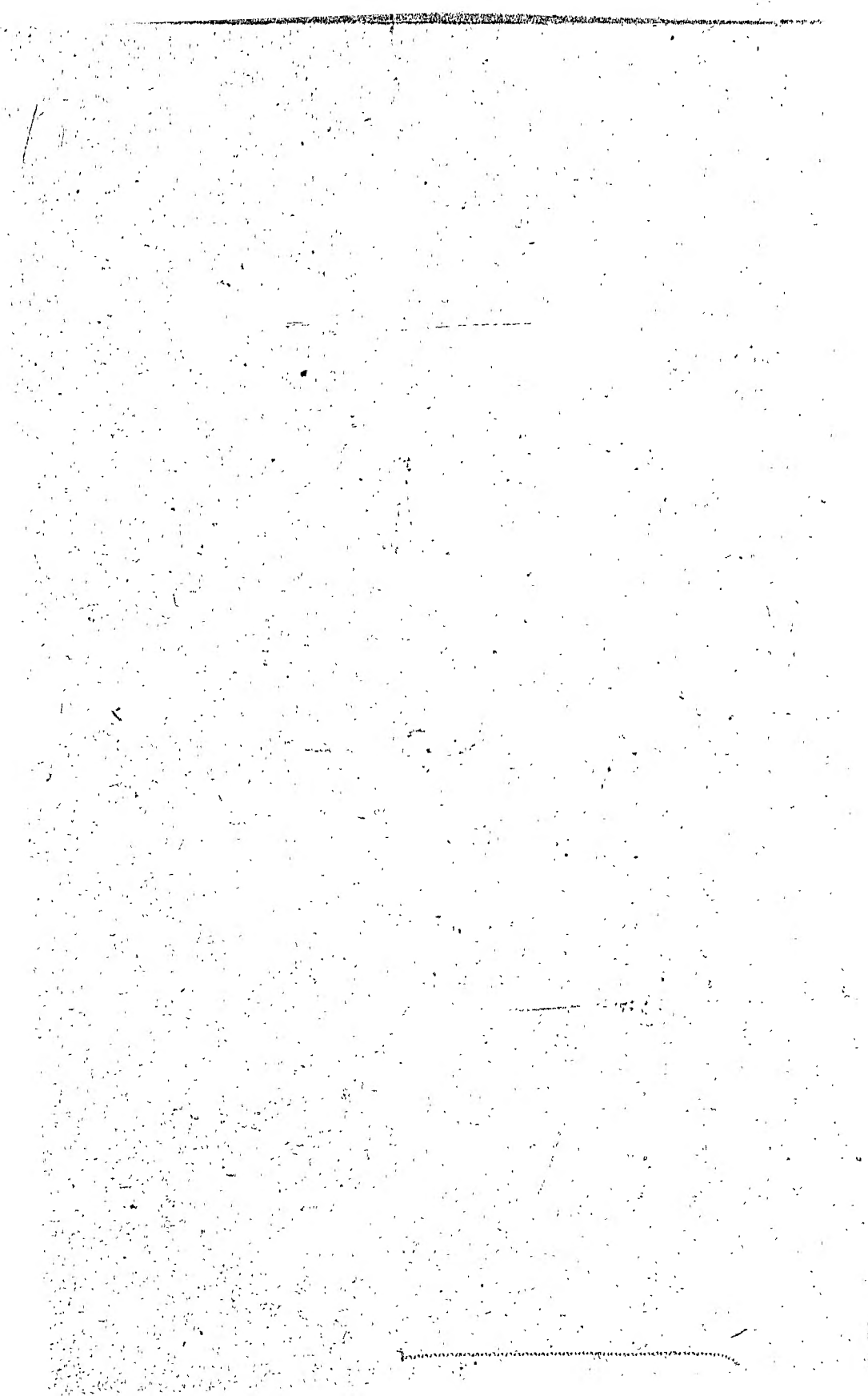
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

IN

WESTERN CANADA



REV. A. G. MORICE, O.M.I.





HISTORY

OF THE

Catholic Church

IN WESTERN CANADA

From Lake Superior to the Pacific

(1659-1895)

BY

THE REV. A. G. MORICE, O.M.I.

Member of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba; of the *Société Historique de Saint-Boniface*; the Art, Historical and Scientific Association of Vancouver; the Natural History Society of British Columbia; the Philological Society of Paris, etc.

Author of "The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia"; *Dictionnaire Historique des Canadiens et des Métis Français de l'Ouest*; *Aux Sources de l'Histoire Manitobaine*; *Au Pays de l'Ours Noir*; "Notes on the Western Dénés," etc.

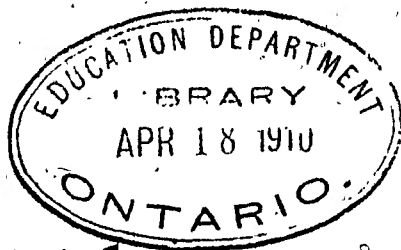
With Maps and Illustrations

VOLUME I

TORONTO

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TORONTO

TO HIS GRACE
THE MOST REVEREND
L. P. ADÉLARD LANGEVIN, O.M.I., D.D.
Archbishop of St. Boniface

THIS WORK
WHICH TELLS OF THE LABOURS OF HIS
PREDECESSORS AND THEIR CO-WORKERS
IS
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

PREFACE

The history of the Catholic Church in Western Canada is the history of deeds of heroism, devotion to duty under the most untoward circumstances, stirring adventures and hair-breadth escapes scarcely paralleled in modern times. To improve the moral and material condition of the lowliest in the scale of humanity and gather them into the fold, missionaries bade an everlasting farewell to home and friends, and buried themselves in the snows of the North, the sombre forests of the Far West and the wind-swept prairies of the Centre or Middle West, leading there a life of sacrifice unknown to most men, but precious in the eyes of God.

The history of our Church in those boundless regions is practically that of the country itself. First in the field of discovery and exploration, Catholics long remained the only representatives of civilization there, and when people of other denominations flocked to the land of promise, the descendants of the pioneer explorers and *coureurs de bois* knew how to assert their right not only to existence in the country of their birth, but even to an adequate share of influence in the direction of its public affairs.

To mention but what applies to the territory now called Manitoba, the first governor of the colony out of which that province was evolved was a staunch

Catholic; the first missionaries of the Gospel within its boundaries were Catholics, and the first institutions of education which were ever established for the benefit of its inhabitants owed their origin to Catholic effort. Freedom from the fetters of commercial monopoly was wrenched from the then governing body by Catholics, who afterwards took an honourable part in the counsels of the incipient nation, and it is the same class of people that Manitobans must to-day thank for the constitutional liberties under which they live, or to which they can legitimately lay claim.

Even in far-off British Columbia we see Catholics acting everywhere as pioneers. The exploration of the north of that province and the appalling descent of its great fluvial artery, the torrent-like Fraser, were the work of a Catholic, seconded by a Catholic and accompanied by Catholic boatmen. The first resident whites on mainland and island were Catholics, as were also the first missionaries who took the Gospel to either part of that country. Nay, even within our own times we find that the first child born in the commercial metropolis of the Canadian Pacific, Vancouver, was the offspring of Catholics and received baptism at the hands of a Catholic priest.

From the foregoing it will be gathered that it is none too soon to put on record what the Church has done for those immense regions. Conversely, it may also be permitted to hope that, unless we have

egregiously failed in our task, our work contains elements of interest for the most different classes of people. The historian should find in it data implying a most satisfactory evolution from savagery to comparative civilization, order from practical chaos, progress and organization succeeding the most primitive stages of human society.

Apart from the satisfaction to be derived from the contemplation of such achievements and the study of the many steps that led thereto, the general reader should find in our pages sufficient items of interest to make up for such of their contents as might not appeal to his own personal tastes. In this work as in our "History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia," which found such favour with the public, it has been our aim to add readableness to importance and value as a record of past events. With this end in view, we have not deemed it inconsistent with seriousness and sound criticism to occasionally enliven the relation of the deeds of the apostolic labourers in the Lord's vineyard by the introduction of details concerning minor, but more striking, incidents in their careers. The true physiognomy of a portrait, the real characteristics of a picture often result from apparently useless, yet well directed, strokes of the brush.

This consideration will explain the presence in our narrative of the somewhat elaborate accounts of, for instance, the massacre of Father Aulneau and companions; the episode of Saint-Pierre and his expe-

dient to get rid of the Assiniboine braves; the deplorable affair of Seven Oaks; the rising of the halfbreeds to avenge the assault on one of their fellows and, later on, to put an end to the exactions of the trading company; the murder of Rev. Mr. Darveau; the battle of a handful of halfbreeds against two thousand Sioux; the adventure of Bishop Grandin with the bogus Son of God, and afterwards, of the same in the midst of the Great Slave Lake blizzard; the terrible night spent by Father Lacombe with two contending war parties; the freezing of Rev. Mr. Goiffon and the consequent destruction of the St. Boniface cathedral; the untimely death of Fathers Eynard, Lamure, Hert and Chapelière, of Rev. Mr. Graton, Brother Hand and Louis Dazé; the awful fate of Brother Alexis; Father Lacombe's intervention with the Blackfeet on behalf of the Canadian Pacific Railway; the sad experience of Father Lefebvre abandoned by the Eskimos on the inhospitable shores of an Arctic river; the shooting of Rev. Mr. Brabant by a Pacific coast Indian; the episode of Chœnnih and the supposititious sack of flour; the Frog Lake massacre; the foul murder of Bishop Seghers, etc.

The lover of purely secular lore will find in our pages a reliable account of the discoveries and explorations of the French in the Canadian West; unpublished details on the establishment of the Red River Settlement and the state of the country at the time it was attempted. He will witness the dawn

and development in the centre of the North American continent of colonial institutions which culminated in the incorporation of a petty commonwealth within the new Dominion of Canada.

Above all, the English reader will be for the first time furnished with what we have endeavoured to make a dispassionate account, after unimpeachable sources of information, of the Red River Insurrection. We venture to bespeak for that part of our book the closest attention, fondly hoping that the new light thrown on those momentous events will contribute to do away with the dark legends and unfounded surmises which so many English authors have so far given as undoubted history.

The Fenian scare and the aftermath of the movement of protestation against the encroachments on the rights of the original Manitobans will likewise receive proper treatment, and even through our relation of the noble deeds of the rank and file in the Church's army on the western plains of Canada, we fancy that the reader will perceive the growth and evolution of the population, the share of the Catholics in the direction of public affairs in Manitoba and elsewhere, as well as the rôle they played in the foundation of new centres of human activities.

Finally, we flatter ourselves that even the reader with antiquarian or scientific aptitudes will welcome the autographs of the principal heroes, both lay and clerical, of our narrative, as well as the account and practical illustration of the means resorted to by the

missionaries in the religious and secular instruction of their charges.

Speaking of illustrations, we might perhaps take the liberty of pointing out two which we think deserve special mention. We refer to that which represents the famous cathedral with the "turrets twain" of the poet Whittier, now for the first time shown in its authentic garb, and the portrait of the halfbreed leader of 1869 and 1885, which is from an actual and most resembling photograph, instead of a more or less fanciful sketch intended to represent him either as he was at the time of the troubles, or when he had to conceal his identity under a disguise for the sake of personal safety.

Another point which we may mention will appeal to the people of special localities. How many Calgarians, for instance, know the origin of their beautiful city? They will find it explained in our pages. So will the inhabitants of such places as Winnipeg, St. Boniface, Regina, Prince Albert, Edmonton, St. Albert, Végreville, and Morinville find therein that of their respective localities.

Throughout the forty-three chapters of this book we have endeavoured to be as impartial as possible. We do not believe in panegyrics any more than in persistent vituperation. Likewise, we realize that uniform success in things mundane is very far from common. When it is a question of human deeds, even though they be undertaken for the greater glory of God, failures are not unknown. These but too

often follow successes; but they serve only to accentuate the merit of the latter.

On the other hand, because our aim has been to give each one his due, we sincerely wish we had not met in our way a certain class of people, whose doings and sayings could not possibly be passed over without a word of blame. For this reason some non-Catholics will probably be tempted to see traces of sectarian animus in our strictures on the same, in spite of the very character given those who were responsible therefor by their own co-religionists, as will appear in the following pages. We prefer truth, even when accompanied by the apprehension of such criticism, to condoning words and deeds which do not conform to received professional ethics. Moreover, far from seeking out the occasions of animadverting on antagonists in the missionary field, we have avoided them as much as possible, consistent with the exposition of our own men's labours. When some mention of the former was unavoidable, we have striven to be as discreet as we could with the wealth of information at our command.

But we should like it to be distinctly understood that the prime merit of the present work, if it has any, must lie in the originality of its contents. It is a first-hand book written after hitherto unknown, or at least unutilized, sources of information, not a rehash of matter already published by various authors. Even in connection with historical questions which have been treated by specialists, such as

the French origins of the Middle West, we have made it a point to go for our authorities to the very first sources, Lavérendrye's manuscript letters, memoirs and journals, as well as those of Governor de Beauharnois, Legardeur de Saint-Pierre, etc.

For our account of the foundation of Lord Selkirk's Settlement we have carefully perused the voluminous correspondence of that truly great man, as well as that of his lieutenant, Miles Macdonell, and others. With regard to the permanent establishment and the history of the first thirty years of the Church in the Canadian West, we have based our entire narrative on the originals of the letters exchanged between the Bishops of Quebec and their representative and clergy on the western plains. The official publication of the Oblate Order—which does not circulate outside of its various posts and, on that account, is as little known to the general reader as any manuscript in the dust of an old library—has furnished us with most of our data concerning the labours of its members within the territory embraced by our book.

These are all primary, or first-hand, sources of information. Apart therefrom, we have occasionally had recourse to such secondary works of reference as the more or less complete histories of Manitoba, the West and British Columbia by Ross, Gunn and Tuttle, Hargrave, Hill, Begg, Bryce, Dugas and ourself, without neglecting books and pamphlets of more limited scope, or of only partially historical char-

acter, as Dom Benoît's monumental *Vie de Mgr. Taché*, the latter's invaluable *Vingt Années de Missions*, and the works or compilations of Masson, Ross Cox, Southesk, Milton and Cheadle, Mayne, Macfie, W. Pike, Petitot, Prud'homme, Laut and perhaps a score of others.

For the political troubles of 1869 and 1885 our authorities have been most abundant. The reader will often be referred thereto through the copious footnotes that accompany the chapters bearing on those subjects.

We are the happy possessor of all the printed documents we have made use of. But it stands to reason that the numerous manuscripts we have examined while preparing this History are out of the reach of profane eyes. We have, however, found no uncompromising Cerberi guarding them, but, on the contrary, most obliging gentlemen ever ready to allow of a good long peep at their treasures. It is therefore our agreeable duty to publicly thank in this connection Rev. Dr. L. St.-Geo. Lindsay, the keeper at Quebec of the most precious collection of manuscripts north of Mexico, if not in the whole of America; Father A. E. Jones, S.J., the learned archivist of the Jesuits in Montreal; Drs. Doughty and Roy, respectively the head and assistant of the Department of the Archives at Ottawa, as well as Dr. Jos. Prud'homme who, at the bidding of Most Rev. L. P. A. Langevin, O.M.I., has let us have free access to the valuable documents in his keeping at St. Boniface.

Others, too numerous to mention, have likewise lent their valued aid by furnishing us with replies to occasional queries concerning points within their personal competence. Very Rev. H. Leduc, O.M.I., Vicar-General of St. Albert, deserves in this connection the special thanks of the author. Last, not least, we beg to acknowledge our many obligations for favours conferred by our worthy archbishop, who, in conjunction with our kindly provincial, the Very Rev. Prisque Magnan, has encouraged us by word and deed while engaged in the preparation of this work, which may God bless and prosper, for whose glory and honour it was undertaken!

WINNIPEG, October 9, 1909.

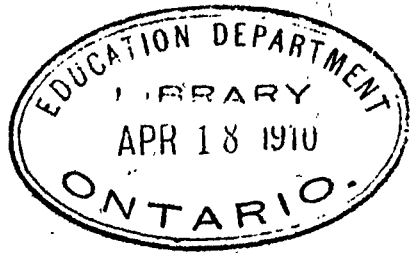


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CATHOLIC CHURCH

IN WESTERN CANADA

PART I

First Origins in Middle West

CHAPTER I.

THE PEOPLE AND THE FUR TRADE.

1659-1727.

Three hundred years ago the vast region between Lake Superior and the Rocky Mountains was indeed a lone, silent land. Neither the sombre forests to the east of Red River, nor the boundless prairies to the west of that stream knew aught of what we now complacently call civilization. Here and there only hordes of unsophisticated Indians, numerous in comparison to what they are now, though by no means commensurate in numbers to the expanse of land over which they roamed, alone disputed with the bouncing buffalo the free possession of the soil.

South of Churchill River, on the one hand, and the north branch of the Saskatchewan, on the other, these were divided into four principal tribes, which could be reduced to two ethnic families. From Sault

Sainte Marie to the Lake of the Woods, the Chipeways or Sauteux (from the name of their main seat) held sway, to the number of at least 35,000, and peopled after a way the rocky shores of the lakes and the dark retreats of the woods.

North and south of the present boundary line, their immediate neighbours and congeners in the west were the Crees or Christinaux, as the French originally called them, after one of their bands. This was a powerful tribe, active and energetic, which ranged over the territory south of Churchill River, from the Lake of the Woods and Hudson Bay, in the east, almost to the Rocky Mountains, in the west, where they met their hereditary foes, the famous Blackfeet, a warlike division of the same Algonquin race which was as essentially a plains tribe as the Crees were originally denizens of the woods.

The former at first dwelt along the Saskatchewan, numbering some 20,000 souls; but, at the time of which we write, they had just been driven to the southwest, and now occupied the region extending from slightly north of the Bow River to the upper Missouri and beyond. This result had been accomplished by an alliance of the Crees with a branch of the Sioux at first called Assiniboels, and now better known as Assiniboines, "those that cook by means of stones." Having become dissatisfied with their brethren of the great American plains, those aborigines moved north, and were vouchsafed a gen-

erous hospitality by the Crees, who made room for them, at first between Lakes Winnipeg and Manitoba and the basin of the river to which they gave their name; after which they gradually drifted towards the headwaters of that stream and its tributaries.

At the time of their separation from the main stock, the Assiniboines may have been 14,000 or 15,000 strong, while the Crees boasted probably over three times that number.¹ In common with the latter they were constantly at war, not only with the Blackfeet, but even and mostly with their own blood relatives, the Sioux, who from time immemorial had likewise endured the enmity of the Chippeways of the east.

North of these important tribes ranged the numberless bands of the great Déné race, of which further mention shall be made later on.

All the tribes of the Middle West agreed more or less in their sociology and religion. When fully dressed—a rare occurrence for the men in summer—they wore in the guise of a cloak the skin of the buf-

¹The Crees are now about 15,000. Yet, writing in 1797, a fur trader by the name of John Macdonell stated that "owing to their wars with their neighbours, the smallpox of 1780-81, and other misfortunes, the third of the nation does not now remain" (in Masson's "*Les Bourgeois du Nord-Ouest*," vol. I., p. 277). Considering that civilization has not, as a rule, increased the native population, this would give 45,000, and more, as the correct figure to represent the number of Crees even as late as 1780. But it is known that another visitation of the plague in 1838 swept off at least half of the prairie tribes. From this it would seem that 50,000 would be a very moderate figure for that tribe previous to the advent of the whites. It is commonly divided into the Crees proper (of whom there are the prairie and the wood branches), the Muskegongs, and the Monsonis.

falo, on the flesh of which mostly they subsisted, while leggings and moccasins of the same material, or of some other skin, sometimes in conjunction with a shirt-like piece of apparel worn with the hair on, completed their costume. During the warm season the men quite often contented themselves with the breech-clout and moccasins, while the women wore a short petticoat, always of skin, fastened to the waist by means of a leather belt.

They dwelt in skin tepees, conical lodges mounted on poles, the lightness of which allowed of easy displacement, and, besides the meat of the buffalo, which were then to be found in immense herds, they lived on fish, a species of wild rice, and berries, according to the season.

No tribe was noted for the purity of its morals or the honesty of its code, and polygamy was general, while a temporary exchange of wives was often considered the greatest token of friendship. Hence woman's lot was generally very wretched, and divorce was a common occurrence.

Though to the Blackfeet of the Far West *Natus*, or the Sun, would seem to have been the supreme Deity, from the yearly festivities celebrated in his honour, celebrations which had a counterpart in the thirst-dance of the Crees, *Kichi-Manitou*, or the Great Spirit,² was very generally, at least at the time of the discovery of their country, regarded as the

²Several English authors wrongly translate this expression: the Master of Life.



AN INDIAN OF THE CANADIAN PLAINS.

Master of Life, who created the world and all that is good in it, while evil and the miseries to which human flesh is heir were attributed to the opposite principle, *Machi-Manitou*, or the Bad Spirit.

The Bad Spirit had to be propitiated by incantations, the ministers of which were supernaturally endowed shamans, or medicine-men, whose dancing and insufflations were accompanied by vociferous singing and the beating of drums. The Great Spirit was honoured by periodical celebrations, when the chiefs or the old men thanked him publicly for past favours to the tribe, and implored his assistance against their enemies. After some sacred chanting, the feast was crowned by a banquet and several rounds of smoking, in the course of which the stem of the pipe was first inclined to the south, the home of the Deity, then successively toward the earth, the rising sun, and the west.

This was the only collective worship known to them, and it was not frequent. Individuals preferred addressing their homage to the Evil One, because he alone was supposed to be disposed to do harm. In such cases a dog would be sacrificed, or pieces of personal property, part of the hunt or any valuable object, were offered up by being left on scaffolds, out of the reach of the wild beasts.

This aboriginal population was thus spinning out its simple life in alternate spells of peace and war—which, in the latter case, meant ambushes and massacres of the weak by the strong—perfectly uncon-

scious of other worlds beyond the "Great Lake," and of the blessings the Redeemer had brought them, when it gradually dawned upon them that, in the far south, people hailing from distant lands, pale-faced and bearded, had made their appearance, who had at their disposal wonderful fabrics and terrible weapons.

Some of these foreigners were soon to pass through their own country in the persons of two French adventurers, Pierre Esprit Radisson and Ménart Chouart, Sieur Desgroseillers. The former was a native of Paris,³ and was born in 1636, while the latter came from Charly-Saint-Cyr, near Meaux, where he first saw the light of day about 1621. Desgroseillers having married Radisson's sister, the two Frenchmen became bound by family ties which, added to a similarity of inclinations, prepared them for the wonderful career which was to be theirs.

Both have been represented as Protestants by Dr. George Bryce⁴ and others, and, while disclaiming for Desgroseillers any such affiliation, even Abbé George Dugas declares that "it cannot be doubted that Radisson was a Huguenot."⁵ Yet both adventurers were Catholics. Desgroseillers passed his early

³He lived a long time at Saint Malo, hence probably the *lapsus calami* of A. C. Laut, who states ("Pathfinders of the West," p. 6. Toronto, 1904) that he was born there.

⁴"The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company," p. 3. Toronto, 1900.

⁵*L'Ouest Canadien*, p. 22. Montreal, 1896. Such is also the opinion of Father Lewis Drummond, S.J. ("The French Element in the Canadian Northwest," p. 2. Winnipeg, 1887).

youth with the Ursulines of Quebec, and Mother of the Incarnation speaks of him in the highest terms. Later on he became a sort of lay brother, giving his time and work to the Jesuit missions. Furthermore, when grown up and in the midst of his peregrinations, it is on record that he one day exhibited to the gaze of wondering Indians a picture of the Flight into Egypt, which he would scarcely have kept had he been a Protestant. But an irrefutable proof of his Catholicity rests on the fact that his name is found in the registers of Three Rivers as godfather to several children.

As to Radisson, he commences his journal with the well-known formula "To the Greater Glory of God,"¹ which of itself betrays his familiarity with the Jesuits, who are known to have favoured him both with useful advice and with pecuniary assistance. Here is what he writes in his memoirs concerning these much maligned missionaries: "Their only desire is the coming of the kingdom of God. They give evidence of a truly admirable charity towards all who work and show themselves worthy of help by their honest conduct. This is the mere truth. It is the answer I give to all those who would ever pretend to the contrary. I speak here from personal knowledge."²

If we consider that this is from a private document

¹The motto of the Jesuit Order.

²Quoted from L. A. Prud'homme, *Notes Historiques sur la Vie de P. E. Radisson*, pp. 27-28.

which was not to be published during the lifetime of its author, and from which, therefore, he could expect no earthly returns, it will be easy to decide whether Radisson was or not a Protestant. Moreover, as Miss Agnes C. Laut observes,⁸ he admits having gone to confession to the Jesuit Father Poncet. This alone ought to decide the question.

However, we may as well admit that he was not the soul of honour, nor were scruples much in his way when it was a question of attaining his ends. Twice traitor to his own country, he does not seem to have been much more sensible to the requirements of truth with regard to his travels than to the necessity of a dutiful allegiance to the land of his birth. His journal, besides being so vague in its topographical details, contains statements which scarcely command belief, as when he mentions, for instance, having one day met a pack of three hundred bears!⁹ Another time, having reached a lake in the vicinity of James Bay, he would make us believe that, with Desgroseillers, he had killed six hundred moose.¹⁰ Hence no wonder if some of his other computations smack of exaggeration. For instance, it is hard to believe him when he speaks of a village near Lake Superior that contained "more than seven thousand warriors,"¹¹ that is, at least, twenty thousand souls.

⁸"Pathfinders of the West," p. 41.

⁹In Prud'homme's *Notes Historiques*, p. 19.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 31.

Be this as it may, it appears that the two Frenchmen were the first visitors to the land of the Crees, wherever they may have met them. This was in 1659-60. Leaving the shores of one of the great lakes¹² in company with twenty-seven fellow countrymen, they pushed to the southwest, going possibly as far as the upper Mississippi, and returned to the north by way of the territory of the Crees. More than this we cannot say with any degree of certainty.

This voyage of the two friends was that of adventurers and *coureurs de bois* rather than of explorers. It left no traces behind, neither did it enlighten the civilized world on the nature of the country and people they had visited. Therein does not lie Radisson's claim to immortality; we must seek it elsewhere.

Displeased at the treatment he had received at the hands of the French authorities, he turned to the English for assistance, and told them of the fabulous amount of valuable furs they could get if brought into contact with the tribes of the great Canadian plains. His intrigues caused in course of time the formation of a trading association which was destined thenceforth to have on that immense region the most lasting influence. We mean "the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson Bay," commonly called the Hudson's Bay Company.

This was at first composed of Prince Rupert, the

¹²Which Radisson calls Lake of the Hurons.

Duke of Albemarle, General Monck, and fifteen other noblemen or merchants, who were granted by Charles II. a charter embodying such vast powers that, in after years, its validity was more than once contested. This comprehensive document gave the Company "the whole trade of all those seas, streights, and bays, rivers, lakes, creeks, and sounds, in whatever latitude they shall be, that lie within the entrance of the streights commonly called Hudson's Streights, together with all the lands, countries, and territories upon the coasts and confines of the seas, streights, bays, lakes, rivers, creeks, and sounds aforesaid, which are not now actually possessed by any of our subjects, or by the subjects of any other Christian prince or State."

This was generous indeed. But some there are who, remembering the axiom "nobody giveth what he possesseth not," may find this liberality of a cheap kind, since never before had an English monarch claimed as his what, on the 2nd of May, 1670, Charles II. so kindly bestowed on his kinsman and future associates in the fur trade.

These, however, lost no time in improving their opportunities. Thenceforth ships would leave the Thames for the frozen shores of Hudson Bay, laden with muskets and ammunition, axes and hatchets, knives and kettles, together with tobacco and spirits, ready-made coats and various fabrics, which they disposed of, at an enormous profit, to the natives who soon hurried thither. In return they received

from their dusky customers the choicest peltries of what is now the Middle West of Canada.

The English traders established posts at Albany and Moose rivers, and then at Rupert River, Port Nelson and New Severn, calling Rupert's Land after their patron the region tributary to Hudson Bay. These forts, quite primitive at first, were gradually enlarged, until some of them became worthy of their name. Nay, one of them, Prince of Wales' Fort, at the mouth of the Churchill River, was built of stone in the form of a large quadrilateral with regular bastions, and boasted the possession of numerous cannon.

But the French, who claimed priority of discovery, could not help seeing these establishments in the light of an intrusion upon their rights. Several times did they capture some of them from their owners, after daring exploits by the Chevalier De Troyes, D'Iberville, and La Pérouse, which cannot but excite genuine admiration. However, these had to be returned, or were retaken, and political complications in Europe finally confirmed the English in the possession of the same.

Hence the energies of the French were, from that time on, bent towards diverting from English channels all they could of the spoils of the woods and prairies.

Another motive for the extension of their activities towards the west lay in the fact that, after many fruitless attempts at discovering a passage to Asia

through Hudson Bay and the north of America, the directing minds of the time had become convinced that this was to be sought overland, instead of by an imaginary water route the existence of which some still persisted in affirming, but which nobody could find.

Useless to remark that geography was still in the dark as to the North Pacific coast. It was known that there was a sea beyond the American continent as far north as 43° and what was then called the Strait of Avian, after which it was supposed there was a Gulf of Love (*Golfe d'Amour*), followed by an isthmus which united the land called "Bourbonia," in the southeast, to the steppes of Tartary, in the northwest. In April, 1718, a priest of the Congregation of the Mission,¹³ Father Bobé, wrote a most learned dissertation embodying all that was known or conjectured at the time concerning the geography and ethnology of that part of the world, not omitting to submit that it was through the above mentioned isthmus that Tartars and a few Israelites had crossed into America. The ponderous document ended by declaring that the discovery of the Sea of the West would be glorious for the King, useful to France, and meritorious in the eyes of God.¹⁴

As a practical result of this and previous agita-

¹³Or Lazarist, not "one of the Jesuit missionaries of New France," as Mr. Lawrence J. Burpee has it, p. 195 of his "Search for the Western Sea."

¹⁴*Mémoire pour la Découverte de la Mer de l'Ouest*, in Canadian Archives, Ottawa.

tions on the subject, it was decided that a preliminary step should be the founding of three posts, one of which it was resolved to establish on Lake Superior, the other on the Lake of the Christinaux (Lake of the Woods), and the third on that of the Assiniboels (Lake Winnipeg).

In furtherance of this plan Zacharie Robutel de la Noue, a French Canadian who had fought in 1680 against the English of Hudson Bay, left Montreal in July, 1717, and built a house at Kaministiquia, on Lake Superior, which was to be the embryo of the far-famed Fort William of later years. He even tried to push on to Lac la Pluie, or Rainy Lake; but the hostility of the Sioux prevented him from accomplishing his end. So that, as he confined his exertions to Kaministiquia,¹⁵ he was replaced in 1721 by a Captain Deschaillons de Saint-Ours, who did not venture any farther west and was himself removed four years later.

Meantime, other counsels had prevailed. The discovery of the Western Sea, which was uppermost in the thoughts of the authorities at Paris and Quebec, was to be attempted by way of the territory of the Sioux. With this end in view, the celebrated Father de Charlevoix was sent to reconnoitre, and, as a

¹⁵It might be remarked here that a Mr. de Noyon was credited with having reached the Lake of the Woods as early as 1688, as appears from a passage in a memoir by Michel Bégon, dated 17th Nov., 1716: "The Assiniboile Indians wanted to take to the Western Sea De Noyon, voyageur, twenty-eight years ago; he then wintered at the entrance of the Lake of the Cristinaux, on the Ouchichiq River, which leads to the Lake of the Assiniboiles, and hence to the Western Sea."

result of his report, though against the dictates of his better judgment, a mission was established among the Indians on Lake Pépin (1727). Those terrible lords of the American plains had just massacred some Frenchmen on their way to Louisiana, and it was deemed expedient to pacify and civilize them to some extent before parties could pass through their lands with any degree of security. And as the fur trade was by no means superseded by the craving for geographical discoveries, or the interests of religion, a company was at the same time formed whose operations were to be carried on side by side with the efforts of the missionaries.

This gave birth to Fort Beauharnois, on Lake Pépin, an expansion of the Mississippi in what is now Wisconsin and Minnesota. This establishment soon numbered ninety-five lodges of Indians within the shadow of its walls. Yet all these arrangements were to come to naught, for reasons which we shall have to expose further on.

CHAPTER II.

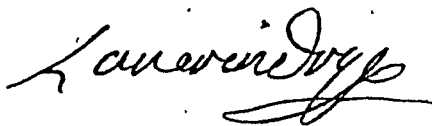
HERALDS OF THE CROSS.

1727-1736.

The right man for such a perilous undertaking as the discovery of the Far West had not so far been tested out. Such a one was now at hand in the person of a noble-minded Canadian who had embraced the career of a fur trader more as a matter of necessity than out of a personal inclination. His name was Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, and he had assumed the surname of De la Vérendrye (which he generally shortened to Lavérendrye) by which he is known in history. Born at Three Rivers, November 17, 1685, of a French gentleman, René Gaultier, Chevalier de Varennes, and of a young Canadian lady, Marie, daughter of Pierre Boucher, the first of the celebrated family of that name, Pierre Gaultier, had served in the French army and been left for dead on the battlefield of Malplaquet, after having received nine wounds.

Yet the reward for his devotion to the French Crown had consisted merely in an empty title, and, in common with other Canadian nobles, he had practically been forced to turn to the fur trade as a means of subsistence. Endowed with a tireless energy, a rectitude of mind and honesty of purpose

hardly common at the time among the upper classes of Canada, and, above all, possessed of strong religious convictions, Lavérendrye was indeed an ideal



LAVERENDRYE'S SIGNATURE.

man for the pursuance of the projects of the French Court and its representatives on the banks of the St. Lawrence.

In 1727, being stationed at Lake Népigon, he had heard through the Indians of a way to the Western Sea, and had in consequence formed a plan which he submitted to the French governor, Charles de Beauharnois, through Father Nicolas Degonnor, S.J., one of the missionaries of the west.¹ This priest having gone to Montreal, he pleaded the cause of Lavérendrye who, in 1730, was in charge of Fort Kaministiquia. The result of his intervention was that on the 8th of June of the following year the latter left Montreal for the unknown West, at the head of fifty men, and accompanied by three of his sons and his nephew, Christopher Dufrost de la Jemmeraye.

¹Father Degonnor (whose name is usually spelt De Gonnor) was born in the diocese of Luçon, France, 19th Nov., 1691 (some say 1671), and had entered the Order at Bordeaux Sept. 11th. 1710, reaching Canada in 1725. He died at Quebec 16th Dec., 1759.

Unable to obtain any funds from the Court to defray his expenses, he had, instead, been granted the monopoly of the fur trade throughout the countries he was to discover, a privilege which was expected, quite wrongly as we shall see, to advantageously make up for any monetary grant then in the power of the Paris authorities to offer. This circumstance, however, made rapid progress impossible, though it contributed towards Lavérendrye coming in contact with the aborigines of the west, and acquiring an effective influence over them.

On his way west Lavérendrye took as chaplain to the expedition Father Charles Michel Mesaiger, a Jesuit born in France, March 7, 1706, who had

Charles Michel Mesaiger S.J.

FATHER MESAIGER'S SIGNATURE.

arrived in Quebec in the course of 1722.² Father Mesaiger was the first priest to see the Lake of the Woods.

But, long before he could get there, Lavérendrye was to have a foretaste of the many unpleasantnesses that were to be his lot in the course of his explorations. On August 27th, when fifteen leagues to the southwest of Kaministiquia, on Lake Super-

²Feb. 2nd, 1726, he pronounced his four vows and was sent to the Miami Indians. He returned to France Oct. 20th, 1749, and died at Rouen 7th Aug., 1766. His numerous letters, still extant, stamp him as a most evenly balanced, and even jovial, man.

ior, his crew, terrified at the prospect of a nine-mile portage, and perhaps also under the influence of the evil counsels of envious traders, refused to go farther. But, writes the explorer, "with the aid of our missionary father, I found the means of coaxing some of my employees into going with my nephew La Jemmeraye, who was my lieutenant, and my son to establish the post of Lac la Pluie."³

With these men of good will he equipped four canoes, and thus was Fort Saint Pierre founded, at the outlet of the lake, some time before the winter of 1731, while the leader of the whole expedition had to return and winter at Kaministiquia. During his stay there, La Jemmeraye was not idle at Fort St. Pierre. He invited the Indians he met to barter their pelts with him. Unfortunately the arrival of the French having become known only to a limited number, trade at the new post could not have been very brisk.

On June 8th of the following year (1732) Lavérendrye set out again with the missionary, his nephew, who had joined him again, two of his children and seven men in canoes. After having been entertained by a large crowd of natives at Fort St. Pierre, Rainy Lake, the little troop pushed on as far as the Lake of the Woods, on the west side of which they erected Fort St. Charles, so named after

³In Pierre Margry's *Mémoires et Documents pour servir à l'Histoire des Origines Françaises des Pays d'Outre-Mer*, vol. VI., p. 586. Paris, 1888.

the patron saint of the chaplain as well as of the Governor of New France.

Speaking of the latter, a memoir he addressed to the Minister of the Colonies in Paris initiates us into the misgivings, based on a quite excusable ignorance, which were then common, as well as to the real object which the French Government had in view by furthering the contemplated discoveries. Beauharnois had thus written concerning Lavérendrye and his undertaking.

“He must also have very accurate maps of New Mexico and California, so that he may not go and throw himself into the *Mer Vermeille*, [Gulf of Mexico] whereinto the Red River of which he speaks has all the appearances of disembodying itself. . . . To these considerations I add one which will no doubt be of great weight with a minister who has, like you, so much at heart the preaching of the Gospel to numerous nations who have not yet heard of Jesus-Christ. It is that, on the way, it shall be possible to take measures to prepare throughout these vast regions establishments equally useful to religion and to the State. Nay, it would be difficult for a friar to pass three or four years travelling through these countries without finding occasions of procuring by baptism an entrance into heaven to several children in danger of death.”

Then, coming to his own experience, the pious governor adds: “I have several times had this con-

solation in the course of my career, and none is more flattering for persons of my condition.”⁴

No contemporary document is known to establish the fact that others than the French Canadian gentlemen and voyageurs were vouchsafed the ministrations of the early Jesuit missionaries at Fort St. Charles or elsewhere in the west. But it is inconceivable that, with the large numbers of Indians who constantly pressed on their footsteps, none should have been baptized. Nay, the late discovery of the remains of three Indians who had been buried within the fort, alongside of Canadians, clearly proves that some of them had received the sacrament that gives a right to Christian sepulture.

Fort St. Charles was a long square, of which one side was one hundred feet long, built of a double line of pickets some fifteen feet high and so planted in the ground that one of them stood up against the junction of two others. Inside of this enclosure were to be found a church, a house for the chaplain and another for the commander, as well as four cabins with chimneys for the men, a store and powder house, all of which were built of logs and clay, and covered with bark.⁵ Lavérendrye states explicitly that he adopted the site pointed out by Father Mesaiger, who based his preferences on the abundance of fish and game.

⁴Unsigned and undated contemporary document in the Canadian Archives, Ottawa.

⁵Beauharnois, 28th Sept., 1733; also letter from Father Aulneau to Father Bonin (“The Aulneau Collection,” p. 72).

This foundation took place in the autumn of 1732. The lack of provisions for so many men precluded the possibility of going farther. In the following spring, the explorer sent his nephew to Montreal, to report on the progress of his expedition. Father Mesaiger, whose health was unsatisfactory, returned with him.

On September 27th, the canoes that had been despatched to Michillimakinac, at the western end of Lake Huron, for provisions and merchandise, came up. It was soon discovered that the goods they brought were ill-assorted and of little use for the fur trade. Yet as both the Crees and the Assiniboines of Lake Winnipeg were clamouring for a trading post nearer home, Lavérendrye established one, in the fall of 1734, at the mouth of Winnipeg River, which he called Maurepas, after the French Minister of Colonies who had scarcely done anything for him.

His eldest son, Jean-Baptiste, superintended the erection of that fort. As to the leader of the expedition, pressed by heavy debts and consequent difficulties with his men and his outfitters, he felt it necessary to repair to Montreal, which he reached August 25, 1734. He had then to his debit as much as 43,000 livres, or French pounds. To satisfy his creditors he had no assets but the expectation of the numerous packs of furs which he anticipated as the natural outcome of his discoveries. So far his three posts had yielded but 600 packs.*

*Beauharnois to the French Minister.

He went as far as Quebec, and had to lease for five years his establishments to his creditors, with the right to exploit them by means of agents, while he, free of all business interests, would devote all his energies to further the discovery of the West. At the time that he was thus sacrificing himself, his youngest son, a lad of eighteen, named Louis Joseph, was at Quebec preparing himself by serious study for the task of mapping out the country where he was to join the exploring expedition.

Then, to replace Father Mesaiger, who could not return, Father Jean Pierre Aulneau de la Touche, S.J., was ordered to go west. His ultimate mission was the evangelization of the Mandans of the upper Missouri, who from their quasi-sedentary habits were believed to be more amenable to Christian ideals and civilized ways than the nomadic hordes of the Canadian plains.

Born in France, April 25 (or 21), 1705, at Mou-

Father Aulneau's name has been written in many ways, Arnaud having, down to a comparatively recent date, been the commonly accepted spelling of the same. Father Petitot (*En route pour la Mer Glaciale*, pp. 192-23). Paris, 1877) contends that it should be Arneau, and quotes in support of his assertion from an old document which he says exists at York Factory, on Hudson Bay. There, he adds, is also to be found a breviary printed at Rouen in 1701, with the name Arneau written on the first leaf, and, underneath, references to Rouen, 1705; and Paris, 1698, together with such phrases in French as . . . "on the north coast of Lake Superior, 1729. All the Indians love me, and repose great trust in me . . . the winter of 1728 very long and severe . . . P. F. Arneau, Rouen."

From the particular mode of death which he attributes to the Father Arneau of the Fort York manuscript, it is plain that Petitot does refer to the second Jesuit companion of Laverendrye. But the very phrases and dates we have reproduced after him make it as evident that that Father Arneau was an entirely different man. The autograph of Father Aulneau, of Fort St. Charles, will settle the question as to the correct spelling of his name.

tiers-sur-Lay, Verdée, of a good family which gave to the Church two other priests and one nun. Father Aulneau had been admitted into the Society of Jesus, December 12, 1720, and, having left La Rochelle, May 29, 1734, he had arrived in Canada August 12th of the same year, after having won golden opinions for his devotedness to the victims of the plague which had broken out on board his ship.

Eager for the conversion of souls, the young missionary wrote from Quebec, April 25, 1735, of the plans he should follow out once arrived in the west. He intended to winter among the "Assiniboels" and the "Christinaux"; then make for the land of the "Ouant Chipouanes," that is, he adds, "those who dwell in holes," and he rejoiced in the thought that "if our good God so will it . . . I shall be the first to bear to them the tidings of the Gospel."⁸

God, in His inscrutable designs, had ordered otherwise. Father Aulneau left Montreal for the west with Lavérendrye on June 13, 1735, happy and contented, though his joy was incomplete for the lack of a priestly confrère to accompany him.⁹ Blessed with a delicate conscience, he scarcely relished the idea of being deprived so long of those consolations of religion which he was himself to confer on others. These scruples were ultimately to seal his fate.

⁸Letter to Father H. Faye, 25th April, 1735 ("The Aulneau Collection," p. 34. Montreal, 1893):

⁹Father Aulneau to his mother, 29th April, 1735 (*Ibid.*, p. 45).

Meantime the explorer's troubles were not at an end. The canoes loaded with his provisions having failed to arrive in time, the winter was passed at Fort St. Charles in economizing, though he had previously sent to Fort Maurepas his nephew La Jemmeraye, two of his sons and as many employees.

As to our missionary, he was acquiring scraps of the Cree language, much against the will of the Indians themselves, who did not appreciate the gift of God. In a letter to Father Bonin, of Michillimakinac, he frankly admitted that he built no hopes on those who traded at Fort St. Charles, since, in addition to their superstitions and depraved natures, the curse of strong drink had put them almost beyond the pale of redemption. "Both English and French, by their accursed avarice, have given them an appetite for brandy," writes the young priest, who shortly after feels in duty bound to add: "I must, however, say in justice to the French with whom I have journeyed that they have not mingled in this infamous traffic, and that, in spite of all the reiterated demands of the Indians, they have preferred to ignore all offers of barter from the tribes to giving them brandy in exchange."¹⁰

To those who know the lengths to which all subsequent traders found it necessary to go in this matter, the remarks of Father Aulneau add to Lavérendrye's memory a halo of uprightness sufficient in

¹⁰The same to Father Bonin, 30th April, 1736 (*Ibid.*, p. 75).

itself to stamp him as an exceptionally conscientious man.

In the spring of 1736 provisions were at a premium at Fort St. Charles. To cap the commander's misfortunes, he was startled on June 4th¹¹ by the news of the death of his nephew, which the starving little party at Fort Maurepas brought him. La Jemmeraye had expired May 10, 1736. He was the first Christian buried within what is now Manitoba. His cousins erected a wooden cross over his grave, and left for Fort St. Charles.

Embarrassed by the lack of provisions which this accession to his personnel rendered still more pressing, Lavérendrye was obliged to dispatch three canoes to Michillimakinac, his nearest base of operations. This was for Father Aulneau too good an opportunity to revisit his brother priests, and profit by their ministrations, to be neglected. He immediately made up his mind to embark with the men, and begged for the company of the explorer's eldest son, Jean-Baptiste, which Lavérendrye could not refuse him. They left on June 8, 1736, in canoes manned by nineteen¹² voyageurs, following in the

¹¹L. A. Prud'homme says June 2nd (*Pierre Gaultier de la Vérendrye, in Mémoires de la Société Royale du Canada*, p. 32); but the discoverer is explicit on this point; he mentions the 4th (see Margry, vol. VI, p. 589). Beauharnois must likewise have been mistaken when he said the 5th (Letter to the Minister, 14th Oct., 1736).

¹²Contemporary documents are not quite agreed on the number of voyageurs in the party. Some say eighteen, others twenty, most of them have it nineteen, and one puts at twenty-four the entire force. The discoveries of the site of Fort St. Charles make it clear that, besides the priest and the gentleman, there must have been nineteen employees.

wake of five other French employees, who had left for the same destination on the third of the same month.

Innocent of any reprehensible intentions and little knowing as yet the treachery of the plains Indians, they did not dream of any danger as they paddled over the island-studded waters of the Lake of the Woods. Yet the commander had advised them to be cautious. They might also have remembered a recent occurrence, insignificant in itself, though fraught with most serious possibilities. A small party of Crees, the inveterate foes of the Sioux, proud in the possession of a few guns obtained at the fort, had been firing from its stockade on some of the prairie Sioux passing by.

"Who fire on us?" inquired the southerners.

"The French," jeered the Crees.

Fatal words, dictated by cowardice, what unforeseen consequences they were to have! The party of five that preceded that of Jean-Baptiste Lavérendrye and Father Aulneau had not gone far when, on the 4th of June, they came in sight of thirty canoes manned by ninety or a hundred Sioux warriors, who at once surrounded them, and tied them up preparatory to torturing them.

"Revenge!" they cried. "These shall pay for the attack on our people at the white men's house."

"But neither we nor our friends ever did you any harm," pleaded Bourassa, one of the voyageurs.

"The French fired on the Sioux," declared the painted warriors.

"You are mistaken," replied Bourassa, "it was the Crees that did so. If you want to make sure of the truth of my words, and must avenge the insult done your nation, go to our fort. There you will find five or six tepees of Crees, the guilty party."

So spoke the poor voyageur, in his name and in that of his companions. Yet the Sioux were but half appeased.

"The French favour our enemies," they objected. "They sell them arms and ammunition and the son of their commander has been made the chief of the Crees."

"I know nothing of this; but you must be aware that you get yourselves at the fort all the arms you can pay for, when we have them. Besides, I have many a time heard the commander of the whites preach peace to the Crees and others."

Just then a slave woman rushed out crying:

"What would you do, my relations? I owe my life to this Frenchman. He did me nothing but good."

This intervention, joined to the prospect of a more worthy prey, made the Sioux relent. They released Bourassa and his companions, but not before they had appropriated their arms and plundered their stores. Then they made for the fort, where, how-

ever, they failed to find the wigwams of the Crees, who had moved off after Bourassa's departure.¹³

Unable to wreak their revenge on their hated foes, the Sioux retraced their steps, their thirst for vengeance whetted by disappointment, and probably intending to fall on the voyageurs by whom they thought they had been wilfully deceived. Bourassa and companions had promised to wait for their return, with the understanding that they were then to receive back their arms; but they had, instead, hurried to Michillimakinac.

The blood-thirsty savages found something better. On an island about twenty miles south of Fort St. Charles, they espied the fire of a large party, which they soon identified as containing Jean-Baptiste de Lavérendrye, the adopted chief of their enemies. It is likely that, blinded by the glare of the flames to what was transpiring on the water, the French were taken unawares. In an instant, arrows,¹⁴ tomahawks, daggers and even the working tools of the

¹³These details are taken from two sources: MSS. documents (vol. XVI, fol. 189) in the Paris Colonial Archives of the Marine, and the Report of Governor de Beauharnois, dated Quebec, 14th Oct., 1736. The latter, written apparently just after the first news of the occurrence had transpired, does not seem accurate in every particular. Thus, it says that "the prairie Sioux, to the number of 130, found Father Aulneau's canoe manned by a certain Bourassa," and ascribes the Frenchmen's liberation solely to the intervention of a squaw, who told the Indians to go on and they would find 24 Frenchmen to destroy. How that woman could know of Father Aulneau's party, who left only four days after the Sioux's encounter with Bourassa, is not clear. It was, moreover, impossible for the savages to meet Father Aulneau's party on their way to the fort. They must have found it on their way back, perhaps after having followed it at a distance ever since its departure.

¹⁴At least one, of iron, has lately been found stuck in the skull of a voyageur unearthed at Fort St. Charles.

camping party were set at work. The whites were killed to the last man, but not before the Sioux had experienced the courage of their victims, if we are to judge by the fact that, ten days afterwards, two Monsoni Crees found over twenty Sioux canoes still besmeared with blood, and, near by, human limbs buried in the sand. The identity of these craft was certain; side by side with the Sioux canoes were two that belonged to the French.¹⁵

A few days after the massacre, the bodies of the slain were discovered by a party of Frenchmen. Their heads, most of which had been scalped, were placed on robes of beaver. The Sieur de Lavérendrye was stretched on the ground, face downwards, his back all hacked with a knife, and a hoe sunk in his loins.¹⁶ His headless trunk was decked out with garters and bracelets of porcupine quill.

As to Father Aulneau, he was resting on one knee, an arrow in his side, a gaping wound in his breast, his left hand to the ground and his right raised as if in the act of giving absolution.¹⁷ It was said afterwards that the majority of the aggressors were

¹⁵See Appendix A.

¹⁶Others say "with a big hole in his loins." This depends on the way we read the original French MSS. *Trouée* (hole), et *houe* (hoe) are very much alike in cursive writing. The cut in the sternum of Lavérendrye's skeleton, which the writer has seen, looks very much like the result of a large and more or less dull implement.

¹⁷The York Factory document, to which we have already alluded, after describing as above the condition of Lavérendrye's body when found, and adding the information that it was headless, goes on to say: "Father Arneau, not decapitated, had a terrible wound in the abdomen, whose entrails had been torn out and spread on the ground. His left hand was cut off" (*En route pour la Mer Glaciale*, p. 192).

averse to putting him to death, and that it was only through sheer bravado that a crazy-brained Indian set at naught the consequences which others dreaded.

Ma très chère mère.

Le long séjour que j'ai été, contre mon attente, obligé de faire à Montréal, me procure encore une fois le plaisir de vous donner de nouvelles assurances de mon respectueux attachement. J'en pars demain, et j'en ai grand besoin, à l'autre extrémité que celle de m'éloigner trop loin pour vous donner de mes lettres et recevoir de votre côté les nouvelles que je le voudrais. Je vous prie de m'écrire, d'ici, d'envoyer encore la lettre de votre sœur. J'en profiterai avec la plus sensible reconnaissance. Voilà une grande larme dans laquelle la providence me fait entrer, pour dire ma chère mère de me faire la grâce de la faire d'une manière digne de lui. J'espère que l'abbé, votre bon oncle, de toutes sortes de consolations humaines, ne m'abandonnera pas, et que si au milieu des biens ou je vais aller, le sort de ma vie au milieu des biens, je ne trouve pas de quoi contenter mon âme, j'en ai besoin. Je trouve de moi-même, de quoi de la terre et l'éternité, pas mes larmes, compagne, la fréquence de mon voyage, beaucoup de me donner la patience de les supporter avec résignation à la sainte et divine volonté. Je prie que pour les jours je vous aie le sacrifice de la messe et je continuerai jusqu'à la mort de vous donner cette unique marque que lors en moi, j'en ai, d'une juste, assurée. Je suis ma chère mère avec un profond respect.

A Montréal le 12^e juin. 1773

vos très humble et obéissant
frère et fils, J. P. Aubin
D. L. C. J. M. M. M.

AUTOGRAPH LETTER OF FATHER. AULNEAU.

TRANSLATION.

My dear Mother.

The long stay which, against my expectation, I have been obliged to make at Montréal, procures me once more the pleasure of giving you new assurances of my respectful attachment. I depart thence

The first of these consequences, if we are to believe the same informants, was a deafening clap of thunder, which struck terror into the hearts of the whole band. They precipitately decamped with their booty, among which were the sacred vessels which the missionary had used for divine service. These, or at least the chalice, fell to the lot of a widow who, in an incredibly short time, lost almost all her sons. So impressed was she by the malediction that seemed to attach itself to the mysterious vessel, that she threw it into a river.

Thus ended Father Aulneau's dreams of evangelization among the Mandans. It seems that, in his latter days, he had some sort of premonition of his forthcoming fate, since, but a fortnight before his death, he had written to Father Degonnor: "Continue, my dear Father, to pray God for me and

to-morrow, having, thank God, no other care than that of going too far to be in a position to send you letters and receive any from you as often as I should like. Perhaps when 340 leagues from here will it still be possible for me to write to you. I shall do so with the most sensible pleasure. Here is a great career into which Providence leads me; pray to God, my dear Mother, that He may grant me the grace of going through it in a manner worthy of Him. I hope that, deprived for His sake of all human consolations, I will not be forsaken by Him, and that if, in the midst of the forests in which I am going to spend my life with the wild beasts, I do not find the means of satisfying my self-love, I shall at least find wherewith to destroy and annihilate it by means of my sufferings. Beseech the Lord to send me many, and to give me patience to bear them with resignation to His most holy and divine will. I pray almost every day for you during the holy sacrifice of the mass, and I shall continue till my death to give you this only token in my power of my dutiful gratitude. I am, my dear Mother, with profound respect,

Your most humble and obedient servant and son,

J. P. AULNEAU,

Of the Soc. of Jesus, Ind. Miss.

At Montreal, the 12th of June, 1735.

recommend me to the Blessed Virgin. I hope soon to finish my course, but dread lest I finish it badly.'"¹⁸ Refined, devoted to duty, and filled with a sense of man's wretchedness in the eyes of God, he passed away without any of those pangs of apprehension with which those of his parts are familiar. His previous life had been a good preparation for that abrupt ending.¹⁸

¹⁸See Appendix B.



AN OLD SQUAW.



CHAPTER III.

PROGRESS AND DECLINE.

1736-1755.

The tragedy of Massacre Island had in the south the injurious effects which it was easy to foresee. The news of what was called the defeat of the French under Lavérendrye reached Fort Beauharnois, where Legardeur de Saint-Pierre commanded, on August 23, 1736. On the 16th of September, a Sioux chief went to the fort with a silver seal suspended from his ear, which, on examination, proved to be that of Father Aulneau. At this sight the French commander, who was more of a soldier than of a diplomat, tore it off with part of the Indian's ear.

Shortly thereafter the Sioux burned the fort of a tribe allied to the French, and, tearing up the fence of the Catholic mission on Lake Pépin, made a bonfire of its pickets. Thenceforth it was nothing but a series of overt acts of hostility against both fort and mission, and, after a consultation with Father Guignas, the superior of the latter, Saint-Pierre evacuated his establishment, and the priest his mission, on May 30, 1737.¹

¹Governor de Beauharnois wrote in his Report of 1738 that "that officer had added that it would be advantageous to destroy that nation," an undertaking the magnitude of which impetuous Saint-Pierre little realized.

When Lavérendrye heard of the calamity that was added to his many misfortunes, he was nearly crushed by the blow. In the first moments of dazed consternation, he would fain have listened to the earnest solicitations of the Indians to put himself at their head, and avenge such an unprovoked crime. But he soon thought better of it, and, in order to allow the first effervescence of passions to calm down, he gave strict orders that nothing should be done before he had heard from the Great Father in the east, meaning Governor de Beauharnois.

Meantime, on September 17, 1736, he sent for the remains of the slain, namely, the bodies of his son and of the missionary, as well as the heads of the voyageurs,² to which he gave a decent burial in the chapel of his fort.

From that time on many and loud were the cries for a war of extermination on the Sioux. Lavérendrye never countenanced such an undertaking. Yet, in the autumn of the following year, some of the murderers, among whom was the Indian who had killed the priest, were captured by a party of Frenchmen. But as the latter were on the point of taking them to their own settlements, in order to make them undergo the penalty they so richly deserved, the prisoners were rescued by Indians akin in blood and possibly confederate in crime.³

²The bones of these must have been brought later on to Fort St. Charles, as some have been found there in such a pell-mell condition that it is clear the bones, not the bodies, had been gathered in.

³"The Aulneau Collection," p. 106.

Nothing daunted by this disaster, Lavérendrye turned his attention to the resuming of his discoveries. But, in answer to the incessant solicitations of Crees and Assiniboines, he thought it best to repair first to Montreal. His financial situation, which was critical, likewise demanded such a step. De Beauharnois received him well, and strongly urged the advisability of a peaceful course, but the merchants were pitiless. They clearly hinted that mismanagement alone could have brought him to such a pass. On the other hand, the envious were complaining that he looked more after pelts than after new lands to add to the colony. However, by dint of expostulation and self-control, he finally succeeded in outfitting some canoes with which he returned west, reaching Fort St. Charles September 2, 1738.

Meantime three hundred Monsoni warriors had, in company with two hundred and fifty other Crees, left for the land of the Sioux, determined to avenge on their own account the wrong done the French. Shortly thereafter eight hundred Assiniboines had taken the same direction with a like purpose. But smallpox, brought from Hudson Bay, broke out among them and paralyzed their movements. God reserved to Himself the right to avenge the death of His priest and companions.

On the other hand, the Indians, desirous of having the French at the "Great Forks of the Assiniboels,"

erected for them a fort with their own hands.⁴ It therefore behooved the explorer to do something in the direction of their wishes. In the fall of 1738 he left for Lake Winnipeg, and ascended the Red River, reaching the confluence of the Assiniboine 24th September of the same year. He was then on the exact site of what was, in after years, to become the metropolis of the Middle West under the name of Winnipeg City.⁵

Thence, in spite of low water, he went up the Assiniboine as far as a point where it was customary for the Indians to strike overland for Lake Manitoba, to-day Portage la Prairie. There he built a fort which he called Fort la Reine, after the Queen of France. This was to become his second base of operations in the west.

It is foreign to our purpose, and beyond the scope of this work, to follow Lavérendrye and his sons in all their explorations or narrate each one of their

⁴As early as 14th October, 1737, it was intended to transfer Fort Maurepas to "the Great Forks of the Red River, to facilitate navigation and commerce" (Lavérendrye's Journal, as quoted by Beauharnois). To hasten the realization of this plan the Indians "built a large fort at the Forks of the Assiniboels, therein to lodge the French" (Gov. de Beauharnois to the French Minister, 1st Oct., 1738). The native structure must not have been up to the standard of the French trading posts, for in his Journal for the years 1738-39 Lavérendrye states explicitly that "Mr. de la Marque told [him] he had brought Mr. de Louvière to the Forks with two canoes, there to build a fort for the convenience of the Red River people," adding: "I found that expedient, provided the Indians were warned" (of it). This new establishment was the Fort Rouge whose name is now known to all the Winnipeggers.

⁵It is to be hoped that, when the memory of the great Lavérendrye is honoured as it should be in Manitoba, this memorable day, 24th September, may be recognized by some sort of civic celebration in Winnipeg.

commercial ventures. We will simply mention the elder Lavérendrye's great voyage to the land of the Mandans, October, 1738, to February, 1739, and the scarcely less important journeys of his son the Chevalier^e to Lakes Manitoba, Dauphin, Winnipegosis and Bourbon, as well as to the lower Saskatchewan. Chevalier de Lavérendrye was the first white man who ever set his eyes on those important geographical points.

In the spring of 1741, his father had again to repair to Montreal, whence he brought Father Claude Godefroy Coquart, S.J., whom, however, some intrigue prompted by jealousy forced him to leave at Michillimakinac.

In the course of the following year (1742) took place that famous voyage which culminated in the Chevalier and his brother François de Lavérendrye discovering the Rocky Mountains, a spur of which they even partially climbed, after having faced numberless perils among hordes of uncouth savages (January, 1743). The explorers must have reached a point in the southwest corner of what is now Montana.

Reverting to the missionary they had left at Fort la Reine, we find that Father Pierre Du Jaunay, of Michillimakinac, had volunteered to evangelize the Mandans, abandoned to their fate since the untimely end of their prospective missionary. "There was a

*Pierre Gauthier, his eldest son since the death of Jean-Baptiste.

great likelihood that our religion would take deep roots among these people, to judge from the character attributed to them and their seven villages, the least of which contains fifteen hundred souls," had written Governor Beauharnois, under date August 14, 1739. But Father Du Jaunay's presence was deemed necessary among the Indians who knew him already, and a new man was preferred for the missions of the Far West. Yet he could not go immediately, "to the great regret of everybody and especially myself," laments Lavérendrye.⁷

When did he go? The explorer adds in the memoirs just quoted that "we possess him to-day to the great satisfaction of everybody." Unfortunately that document bears no date. As this missionary was the first priest who ever reached the site of Winnipeg and resided at Fort la Reine, or Portage la Prairie, the question of his arrival in these places is not entirely devoid of importance.

Justice Baby asserts⁸ that Father Coquart was at the latter post from the summer of 1741 to that of 1744, which contention is certainly wide of the mark. We have seen by Lavérendrye's own testimony that Coquart did not accompany him farther than Michillimakinac in 1741. On the other hand, documents are not wanting which peremptorily show that he was in that mission in 1742, and as late as July 27,

⁷Margry, vol. VI., p. 594.

⁸"The Gazette," Dec. 13th, 1899.

1743.⁹ His sojourn in the West must have been very brief, for on July 21, 1744, we see him again at Michillimakinac, where he supplied the ceremonies of baptism on the child of Jacques and Marie Dumée. All circumstances point to his having left for Fort la Reine in the summer (probably August) of 1743.¹⁰ He cannot have stayed there more than eight or nine months.

Father Coquart was then thirty-seven years old, having been born at Calais (others say Melun)

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "F. Coquart. J.", written in dark ink.

FATHER COQUART'S SIGNATURE.

January 31st (or February 2nd), 1706. He had entered the Society of Jesus on May 14, 1726, and had been sent to Canada twelve years later. Useless to remark that, in the short period of time he passed at Fort la Reine, his ministrations must have been

⁹From the registers of Michillimakinac, which are still extant, we gather that, July 20th, 1742, he made a baptism there, another on the 10th of September of the same year, and a third on Jan. 19th, 1743, so, that he was certainly not in the west during the winter of 1742-43. He did indeed take a flying trip to Kaministiquia in September-October, but on the 9th of the latter month he was already back at his post, as is proved by a letter he then wrote from there to the Governor (Beauharnois to the Minister, 12th Oct., 1742).

¹⁰This view is strengthened by the fact that, according to a document dated June 13th, 1743, "on the demand of Father Saint-Pé, Superior of the Jesuits in Canada, the sum of 1,000 livres, which was granted to the two missionaries to the Sioux, and which had been withdrawn, is restored in favour of the missionaries at the posts of Mr. de la Vérendrye" (The President of the Navy Board to Mr. Hocquart).

entirely confined to Lavérendrye's little Canadian troop.

Its commander was himself greatly in need of a mind that could understand him, and in his distress he must have particularly welcomed the consolations of religion. False reports emanating from jealous rivals had embittered Minister de Maurepas against him to the extent that the Canadian governor had felt it his duty to defend him against the charge of peculation, at a time when the poor explorer owed 40,000 livres, and after his creditors had instituted against him a lawsuit for the recovery of the funds they had lent him (August 25, 1740). "Lawsuits for me who abhor them," exclaimed the distracted gentleman in his memoirs. At Michillimakinac goods to the value of 4,000 livres had been seized from his outfit, thereby imperilling his chances of success in the west, which depended so much on the presents he had to make to the Indians and the regularity with which his men were paid.

Finally, so harrowing had become his trials that, in April, 1742, a suggestion had been made to the effect that an officer able to second him should be attached to his expedition. A Sieur De Muy had even been proposed for the position. Lavérendrye's debts then aggregated 50,000 livres, and his returns were almost insignificant.

No wonder, therefore, if, disgusted at the incessant bickerings of his creditors and the intrigues of rival traders, he asked to be relieved of responsibil-

ities which brought on his shoulders nothing but trouble, anxiety and contumely.

This was in the fall of 1744. He had been giving to the work of discovery and settlement the last thirteen years of his life.

When he retired from the unequal contest, six establishments stood to attest his efficiency as an organizer. These were Forts St. Pierre, founded in 1731 on Rainy Lake; St. Charles, on the Lake of the Woods (1732); Maurepas, at the mouth of Winnipeg River (1734); Rouge, at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers; La Reine, at Portage la Prairie (1738), and Dauphin, established in 1741 in the northwest corner of the lake of the same name. Fort Rouge had been erected in October, 1738, but, owing to its proximity to Forts Maurepas and La Reine, its usefulness did not last long.

By himself or through his children, Lavérendrye had not only explored, but mapped out several times, the country between Lake Superior and the Rocky Mountains, and from the Missouri, in the south, to the Saskatchewan, in the north.

And yet no effort had been made in Paris to help him out of his difficulties, after he had personally defrayed the expenses of so many foundations and explorations. He was a military man, and a commission in the army would have considerably eased his financial budget. Governor de Beauharnois was therefore perfectly justified when he wrote, October 27, 1744, to the French Minister, after a frank

defence of the explorer's conduct: "I beseech you to give him tangible tokens of your kindness, in effecting his promotion on the first occasion, as [would warrant] his seniority over those who have been appointed to vacant companies this year. . . . Six years of service in France, thirty-two in this colony, without any cause for reproach (at least I know of none that I could lay at his door), and nine wounds in his body, were motives that could not make me hesitate to propose him for one of the vacant companies."¹¹

Captain Charles Joseph Fleurimont de Noyelle succeeded him in the direction of the western explorations. Born in 1694 or 1695, of French parents, he had seen service at the head of an expedition against the Fox Indians. He did his best to keep the aborigines of the Middle West from the war-path; but he could not be expected to have possessed over them the influence of Lavérendrye, and even that gentleman did not always succeed in keeping them at peace. Moreover, Noyelle was constantly staying at one or another of the eastern posts, not feeling any personal inclination to exert himself as his predecessor had done.

But he had the good sense to call to his assistance the sons of Lavérendrye. The absence of that gentleman from the western plains was bitterly regretted by Beauharnois, who wrote, October 15, 1746: "I will state, my Lord [the French Minister],

¹¹Margry, vol. VI, p. 597.

that that officer is better qualified than anybody to pursue this discovery and that, at the Sieur de Noyelle's request, I shall not hesitate to send back the Sieur de la Vérendrye."

The recall of Beauharnois himself prevented the execution of this plan. His successor, the Marquis de la Galissonnière, must also have been labouring under the impression that some wrong had been done in the administration of the West, when he thus addressed the Minister in Paris, October 23, 1747: "What has been written you with regard to the Sieur de la Vérandrye having worked more for his own interests than for the discovery is very false. All the officers who will ever be employed there will of necessity always have to bestow a part of their attention to commerce, as long as the King does not furnish them with other means of subsistence."

This was, of course, nothing but sheer common sense. Yet the wrong done was left unrepaired. After some more lingering in the east, Noyelle had at length to proceed to the seat of his ill-favoured dominions. In the summer of 1748 he saw Fort la Reine for the first time, arriving there in the company of the Chevalier de Lavérendrye, but not before the latter had rebuilt, on his way west, Fort Maurepas, which had been burnt down by the Indians.¹² Pierre Gauthier rendered a similar service

¹²Rev. Geo. Dugas contends (in *L'Ouest Canadien*, pp. 109 and 125) that De Noyelle never went farther west than Michillimakinac, though, p. 112 of the same work, he implicitly admits that he did go to "the western posts."

to the buildings of Fort la Reine, which were crumbling to ruins. Then he went north, and erected that same year a post on Lake Winnipegosis, which became known as Fort Bourbon, and another called Fort Poskoyac, near the forks of the Saskatchewan.

Then Noyelle stepped out of a place for which he had no aptitudes (1749).

This was a good opportunity to send back the veteran discoverer, whose rights to public recognition had been partially acknowledged in 1746 by his promotion to a captaincy, and quite recently (1749) by his appointment to a knighthood of St. Louis. As a matter of fact, in a letter of September 17, 1749, Lavérendrye mentions the order he has received from La Jonquière, the new governor, to resume his discoveries. He had then sent the latter a map of the route to follow (of which accompanying document is probably a reproduction), and had communicated to him his plans for the future. But even at this supreme moment of tardy justice, another disappointment was in store for him. He died, December 6, 1749,¹³ aged sixty-four, and was buried in the vault of Notre-Dame, at Montreal.

Lavérendrye was, according to De Beauharnois who knew him intimately, "a meek, yet firm, man, much more able to draw from the Indians the information necessary for the purpose of this discovery."¹⁴ Posterity, whose horizon is less limited be-

¹³Not the 5th, as a few authors have it.

¹⁴To the French Minister, Quebec, 15th Oct., 1746.

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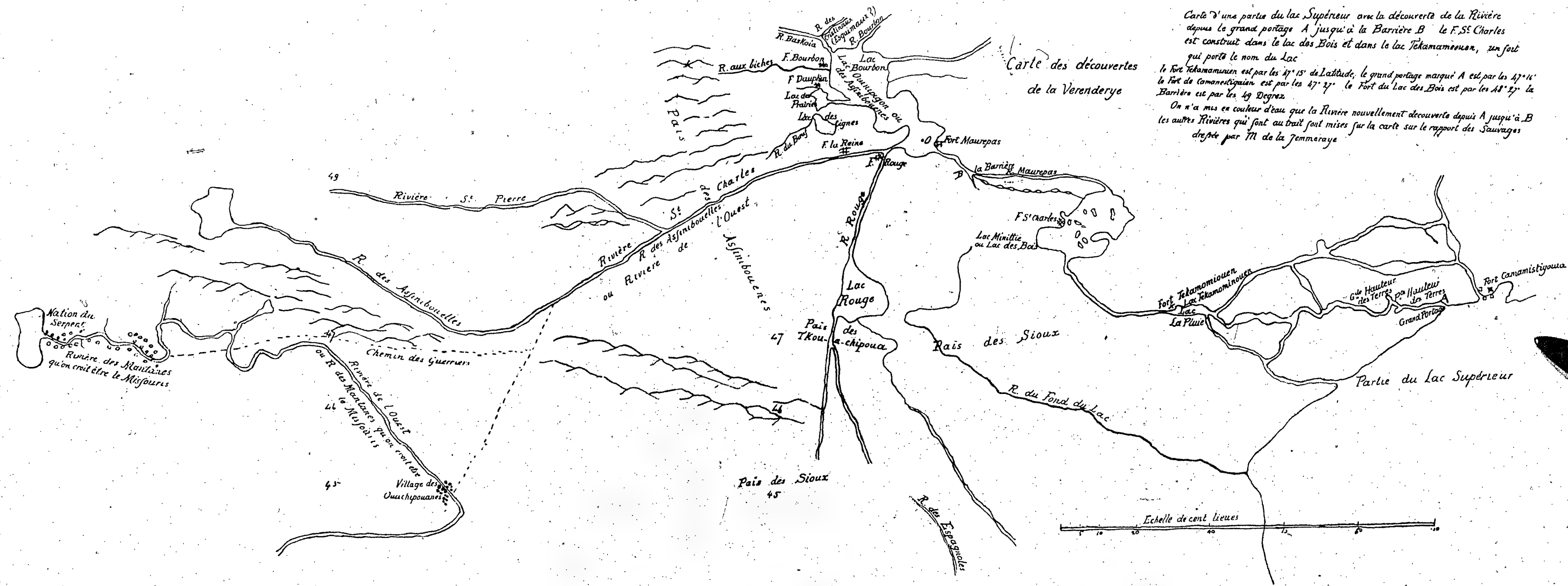
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Carte des découvertes de la Verenderye

Carte d'une partie du lac Supérieur avec la découverte de la Rivière depuis le grand portage A jusqu'à la Barrière B le F. St Charles est construit dans le lac des Bois et dans le lac Tekamamouen, un fort qui porte le nom du Lac.

le Fort Tekamamouen est par les 47° 15' de Latitude, le grand portage marqué A est par les 47° 16' le Fort de Comanestigouan est par les 47° 27' le Fort du Lac des Bois est par les 48° 27' la Barrière est par les 49 Degrés.

On n'a mis en couleur d'eau que la Rivière nouvellement découverte depuis A jusqu'à B les autres Rivières qui sont au trait sont mises sur la carte sur le rapport des Sauvages dressée par M. de la Jemmaraye





cause not so close to the hero, and who can appreciate at their just value the sterling qualities of this really great man, good Christian and patriot, will no doubt decide that full justice has not been done his memory until a statue is raised him in the territory that was the theatre of his achievements.

His eldest son, the Chevalier, who had already done so much for the Canadian West, seemed to have a right to his succession. Other counsels prevailed. A man who had never seen the country was declared "the officer in the whole colony who had the best knowledge of these regions."¹⁵ This was Jacques Repentigny Legardeur de Saint-Pierre, the fiery soldier whom we have seen constrained to abandon Fort Beauharnois, as a result of the massacre of the Lake of the Woods.

Frustrated in his most legitimate expectations, the Chevalier begged to be allowed to serve under him. St. Pierre refused. A ruined man, with debts amounting to 20,000 livres and credit given the Indians which he was denied an opportunity to retrieve, the Chevalier had no resource left him but to apply for redress to the minister in Paris. This he did in a letter which, for dignified pathos and stern logic, has few equals (September 30, 1750). All was in vain. Intendant Bigot had then the keys of the colonial coffers in Quebec, and it was freely circulated that he wanted at the head of the undertaking somebody less scrupulous than a Lavérendrye.

¹⁵La Jonquière, Quebec, 27th Feb., 1750.

Fur trading and peculating, not exploring, was his real object.

Legardeur de St. Pierre was a native of the seignory of Repentigny, where he was born in 1701. He certainly must have had some experience in the Indian ways, for since his fifteenth year he had lived in contact with the American aborigines. When, in 1737, circumstances forced him to evacuate Fort Beauharnois, among the Sioux, he was entrusted with an expedition against the Chickasaws, and ever since he had seen fire in many a battle with savages.

Yet this was hardly the training that best fitted a man for his new position. He endeavoured honestly to impress upon the natives he now met the necessity of putting an end to their suicidal warfare. But his ways were not winning. Instead of succeeding, he alienated the sympathies of Indians who had remained loyal to Lavérendrye, even when that gentleman had felt it his duty to give them the same advice.

Father Jean-Baptiste de la Morinie (whom St. Pierre calls de la Morénerie) had taken the place of Father Coquart at Fort la Reine, arriving there in the summer of 1750, along with the new commander. Dissatisfied with the ways of the latter, the Assiniboines, on whose lands his establishment stood, were very little disposed to listen to a minister of religion bound to him by so close associations. The priest was discouraged at the little amount of good he could do. Perhaps also did he find life with St. Pierre uncongenial. So he made his way back to Michillimakinac, whence he had come, leaving Fort

la Reine June 22, 1751. He was to be the last missionary in the West for about sixty-five years.¹⁶

We seem to recognize a feeble echo of past misunderstandings between the two gentlemen in the following passages of St. Pierre's journal: "Tired of the wretchedness against which I have been unable to protect him, he [La Morinie] made up his mind to return. . . . I would have been sensible to his departure, if it had been in my power to render life more easy for him. I think that he will not forget this caravan, and that he will not consent to have me for a companion except with proper guarantees. I cannot speak of his labours. He took no latitude and made no [astronomical] observations. It is true that he had left without the least mathematical instrument, something I did not expect. It is also impossible for me to speak of any progress in the religious line, since he could not speak any Indian tongue, and moreover neither his eloquence nor his piety could have enlightened barbarians who are hardened in their blindness."¹⁷

¹⁶Father de la Morinie was born at Périgueux, France, 24th Dec., 1705 (others say 1704). He entered the Society of Jesus Oct. 6th, 1724; arrived in Canada in 1736, and returned to France in the spring of 1764.

¹⁷Margry, vol. VI., p. 641. In the face of these explicit statements of the only one who could speak from personal knowledge, and did so at a time when Father de la Morinie was still living, it is hard to see on what authority L. A. Prud'homme can base the following assertion he published lately: "The Indians have always contended that these two missionaries visited them and gave them the first notions of the Gospel. They did profit by the teaching they received, for, over half a century after the departure of those religious, the traders who crossed this valley remarked to their great surprise that these poor Indians, in spite of such a long neglect, still remembered their prayers" (*Revue Canadienne*, 1908, p. 460). We have already seen that evangelizing the natives had been an impossibility for Father Coquart.

Possessed of an excellent opinion of himself St. Pierre did not confine his criticisms to his chaplain. He alone held the secret of the way to the Western Sea. This was, he avers, through the source of the Missouri, wherefore he felt that "the plans of Mr. de la Vérendrye were not solid, since it was not possible to succeed by another route."¹⁸ What a pity the good man did not live to hear of Mackenzie's discovery of that much wanted sea by a still more northern route than that advocated by Lavérendrye!

St. Pierre had for a lieutenant the Chevalier Boucher de Niverville. He ordered him to the Saskatchewan, with directions to establish a post three hundred leagues farther up than Fort Poskoyac. In consequence, that gentleman left Fort la Reine late in 1750; but he fell seriously ill at the former place. However, ten of his men ascended the Saskatchewan and built a spacious fort on the Bow River, just where Calgary now stands (May 29, 1751), which became known as Fort La Jonquière, but was never utilized in spite of the abundant stores left within its wall.

The commander then undertook to go and join De Niverville; but he learned on the way that the Indians who were to accompany him in his proposed explorations, a party that counted forty or forty-five tepees and had camped in the near proximity of Fort La Jonquière, had been treacherously massa-

¹⁸Margry, vol. VI., p. 651.

cred, to a man, by Assiniboines. St. Pierre hearing of this had nothing left but to retrace his steps.

Things were decidedly shaping themselves for the worst. The commander had scarcely been home any length of time when he had an experience which might have resulted in disaster for himself and party. On February 22, 1752, he was alone at Fort la Reine with only five men, the other fourteen having gone foraging, when, at about nine o'clock in the morning, some two hundred armed Assiniboines invaded his establishment. To rush to the insolent fellows was the work of an instant for a man of St. Pierre's temper.

"You are very bold to enter that way my home," he cried out through his interpreter. "What do you want?"

"We have come to smoke," answered someone in Cree.

"Queer way indeed to prepare for a smoke!" put in St. Pierre. "Begone!" he thundered, as he bodily ejected four of the braves and returned to his room.

But presently a soldier hastened to tell him that a crowd of savages had invaded the guard house and seized the arms. Whereupon the commander flew thither, and thought of preparing his men for a battle.

"Yes, we are going to kill him and plunder his place," now sneered an Assiniboine, who realized the helplessness of the French against such numbers.

But St. Pierre was equal to the occasion. He took up a firebrand, and, bursting open the door of the powder house, he knocked in the head of two barrels of powder.

"You are going to kill me, are you?" he vociferated in a perfect rage. "Well, I shall not die alone."

Which saying, he feigned to apply his firebrand to the powder.¹⁹ But no eloquence or indignation was now needed. The braves no sooner took in the situation than they scampered away at a furious rate, almost tearing the gate off its hinges in their efforts to dash out.

In July of the same year (1752) St. Pierre left for Grand Portage, in the east, with the returns of his trade, to meet the canoes that brought him his outfit for the following year. After what had happened, he thought best to take all his men with him, commending his establishment to the care of a friendly band of Assiniboines. Four days after his departure nothing remained of it but ashes.

In this plight St. Pierre had to winter on the Red River. On the other hand, Fort La Jonquière being abandoned, this gradual retreat from the west was ominous for French influence there.

Persuaded that, owing to the restiveness of the natives, "it was not possible to penetrate farther

¹⁹"I passed my firebrand over and over the powder," he says with a touch of exaggeration. Had he done so, he would not have lived to tell of it.



AN INDIAN OF THE FAR NORTHWEST.



than he had done,"²⁰ though personally he had scarcely gone west of Fort la Reine, he repaired to Montreal, September 20, 1753. On the way he met the Chevalier St. Luc de la Corne,²¹ to whom he handed over his command of the western posts.

La Corne's administration fell on evil days. A cloud which had long been hanging over France had just burst in the shape of the Seven Years War. Notwithstanding the general anxiety, it was La Corne who was responsible for the first attempt at agriculture in the Canadian Northwest. This took place in the valley of the Carrot River, a tributary to the Saskatchewan, which he reached by the end of 1753. This he greatly improved by putting up new buildings, so that it eventually lost its original name in favour of Fort La Corne, which it bore until the conquest of Canada and long after.

Not much later La Corne established a fort not far from Lake Cumberland, vestiges of which were found in 1772.

²⁰Margry, vol. VI, p. 651.

²¹Captain Louis St. Luc de la Corne was a brother of the Abbé of the same name, who is well known in Canadian history. He was born at Cataracoui (now Kingston) 6th June, 1703, and had distinguished himself as a soldier, especially at Fort Clinton in 1741, and also at the battle of Carillon, where he captured 150 waggons from General Abercrombie. He took part in several engagements in the campaign which culminated in the fall of Quebec, and was wounded at the battle of Sainte-Foy. Then he attempted to sail for France along with many other noblemen; but, instead of being drowned in the wreck of the ship *Auguste*, as Prud'homme asserts (*Les Successeurs de la Vérendrye*, p. 80) after some authors, he came back to Canada, where he filled an honourable career, serving on the English side in the War of Independence, and afterwards becoming a member of the Legislative Council at Quebec. He died in the course of 1784.

But the time for French expansion and new foundations in the Middle West was gone. Canada was assailed by the English. Scarcely able to stand alone, she could not dream of discoveries, and perforce forgot the Western Sea. Gradually her distress became greater; she needed the assistance of all her children. As La Corne was an officer, he was recalled some time during 1755, and, at the head of Indian troops, he distinguished himself in battles that could not save his fatherland.

Thus ended the first activities of the Catholics in the Canadian West. These humble beginnings were to be nothing but the harbinger of more glorious days.

CHAPTER IV.

AN EPOCH OF TRANSITION.

1756-1810.

We have now reached a period of transition and self-effacement for the Catholic Church in the Canadian West. Henceforth she retires, the better to advance when the hour appointed by Divine Providence shall have struck. Instead of acting directly by her ordained ministers, she will now exercise her influence through her lay children.

This was not a matter of choice with her. Events over which she had no control precluded the possibility of any other line of conduct. At the cession of Canada to Great Britain (1760), not a few members of the clergy went over to the motherland rather than serve under the new masters, with the result that it became difficult to provide for the spiritual needs of even the regularly organized parishes. Furthermore, the Church lost by the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773 the only missionaries she possessed in northeastern America. Hence it could not be a question of the Far West, which had just been abandoned by the civil authorities.

It is, however, more than probable that some of the Canadians who had taken a liking to the free, roving life of the plains, or had perhaps become

entangled in matrimonial unions with the daughters of the soil, preferred to stay and be faithful to their new friends, to returning and subjecting themselves again to the restraints of civilization, which had lost all charms for them.

The origin of that wonderful race, the Half-breeds, has certainly been set down at too recent a date.¹ As early as 1775 the Indians of the Canadian West recognized them as superior to themselves in war and at the chase,² which implies that some there were already who were old enough to pursue either avocation. Nay, in 1778, a halfbreed family answering to the name of Beaulieu was found as far north as the Slave River, when the first fur traders reached that country.³ There can therefore be no reasonable doubt that several servants of the French explorers had contracted matrimonial alliances with the natives, which were probably blessed by the missionary. These voyageurs, after they had become encumbered with halfbreed families, were not likely to abandon their adopted country, any more than men of their class are known to have done in after years.

¹In a valuable treatise on the French element in the Northwest, L. A. Prud'homme gives 1775 as the possible, if not probable, date of the first unions of the French with the native women (*L'Élément Français au Nord-Ouest*, p. 29).

²"One of the chiefs assured me that the children borne by their women to Europeans were bolder warriors and better hunters than themselves" ("Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories," by Alexander Henry, p. 248. Toronto, 1901).

³Moreover, John Macdonell, with whom the reader will soon become acquainted, had married a halfbreed lassie, named Poitras, apparently several years before 1800.

These *coureurs de bois*, despite their many shortcomings, were possessed of the inappreciable gift of faith, and this they strove to communicate to their children. Subsequent events were to show that their efforts were crowned with success. Indeed, it is quite likely that to them and their masters we must look for acts of proselytism which have been put to the credit of the missionary priests. Thus, to quote but one instance, Daniel W. Harmon, a trader of the Far West, relates that a French missionary once resided at the mouth of Dauphin River, and that "there are some Indians still living who recollect prayers which were taught them by the missionary."⁴ This was written in 1800. Now there never was any priest either at Dauphin River or at Dauphin Lake, during the French occupation of the country. But we have seen that, in 1741, the Chevalier de Lavérendrye established a post at the latter place. The formulas Harmon mentions must have been taught by that gentleman or his men, possibly by some who had married in the tribe that traded there.⁵

Then, apart from the pioneers who remained, we have the French Canadians who went to the Upper Country, as what we now call Manitoba was originally known, after the cession, and prior to the orga-

⁴Journal, p. 26 of New York edition (1903).

⁵The passage of Cox's "Columbia," which is usually quoted or referred to (Masson's *Les Bourgeois du Nord-Ouest*, vol. I., pp. 8, 9; Geo. Dugas, *L'Ouest Canadien*, p. 149) as illustrating the influence of the early Jesuit missionaries over the Indians, applies to the region contiguous to Lake Superior, not to the Middle West.

nization of the Northwest Company. Thus a Louis Nolin settled in the Red River valley as early as 1776; another French Catholic, Augustin Cadot, was in the same region in 1780. These are examples that represent a class—the famous freemen—that became very numerous on the western plains.

Prior to the cession, all the traders in the Canadian West had been French, the English of Hudson's Bay never daring to venture any distance inland. Taught by experience acquired in Lower Canada, the authorities had limited the number of fur traders to a few individuals, licensed for specified territories, in order that any violation of the laws forbidding the giving of liquor to Indians might be brought home to the proper party. These restrictions were done away with by the new masters of the land. As a consequence, a few daring English-speaking, and generally Protestant, individuals soon improved their opportunity, and penetrated into the mysterious West, in quest of pelts. Unfortunately intoxicants usually formed the most prominent part of their cargoes, and it is impossible to exaggerate the disorders to which the fiery liquid gave rise among the Indians. Murders and rapes, robberies and assaults of all kinds arose from drinking as light results from the rays of the sun.⁶

⁶The following, taken at random from the journal of one of those traders, is a fair instance of the results of intoxicants among the Indians at the time we have reached in our narrative: "Wm. Henry gave out a 10-gallon keg of high wine [alcohol] gratis. During the *boisson* Porcupine Tail's son was murdered by a *Courte Oreille*, his *beau-frère*; he received 15 stabs in the belly and breast, and fell

A young Scotchman, by the name of Alexander Henry, was one of the first non-Catholics who undertook fur trading after the departure of the French (1761-76). He was in partnership with a Jean-B. Cadot, and piloted by another Catholic, Etienne Campion, while his entire crew belonged likewise to the race of the original voyageurs.

Others soon followed his example, who in a short time amassed a wealth of furs which contributed immensely to swell the ranks of the English traders. Hence no rich merchant in Montreal would hesitate a moment to advance them the necessary goods.

But this very plethora of amateur traders in pelts, besides being the source of untold demoralization, resulted in the ruin of some of the adventurers, who found themselves outwitted by others with more rum to give out and fewer scruples to check their cupidity.

On the other hand, the Hudson's Bay Company, which, after the French regime, had renewed trading operations with the Indians of the plains, saw with alarm this new plague of locusts that swarmed in its preserves. Its members exerted themselves with a vigour hitherto unknown in their frozen

dead on the spot. A few days before this affair the same Courte Oreille had fired at him, but as the gun was only loaded with powder, only a few grains entered the skin and did no injury. About ten days ago another Saulteur was murdered by his wife, who put the muzzle of his gun in his mouth and blew the back part of his head away. They were a young couple, with a boy about a year old. . . . Murders among these people are so frequent that we pay little attention to them. Their only excuse for such outrages is that they are drunk." ("Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson," vol. I., p. 429. New York, 1897).

homes, established new posts, sent out scouring parties to snatch the furs from the Indians in debt to them, and strove to enforce their monopoly over the trade.

The Montreal merchants, who furnished the goods to the adventurers who acted as their agents, soon realized that concerted action was necessary if the Canadians were to cope successfully with their well organized English rivals. This was the origin of the famous Northwest Fur Trading Company. Messrs. Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher, with Mr. Simon McTavish, were its founders and first partners (1784).

In an incredibly short time this energetic corporation covered the whole of British North America with a perfect network of trading posts and trails, which left very little to be done by its rich, but less enterprising, rival, the Hudson's Bay Company. When, to save its own existence, the latter awoke to the necessity of adopting to a great extent the methods of the French, as the Canadians were called, and set up new forts side by side with theirs, a struggle ensued the bitterness of which cannot be realized by those who have not lived in the fur-bearing regions, away from all the restraints imposed by religion or civilization.

Nevertheless, the odds were in favour of the Canadian concern. Knowing the preference of the Indians for the French,⁷ the Northwest Company

⁷Whom they loved best, though they feared the English most, according to St. Pierre.

made it a point to be represented on the plains by as many individuals of that nationality as possible. In fact, practically all its employees, foremen, voyageurs, guides and interpreters were French, and therefore Catholics, while many of its clerks belonged to the same race and denomination.⁸

So it came to pass that French was, for over fifty years, the official and universally spoken language in the Canadian West outside of the Hudson's Bay Company factories. Even the Scotch gentlemen at the head of the principal posts had to know that language, and the ease with which they interspersed their correspondence, when in their own mother tongue, with French idioms and sometimes full sentences is good evidence that they had indeed mastered it.

As a class, the children of the St. Lawrence, deprived of all that recalled religion and refinement, could not be described as exemplary Christians. But it is certainly an injustice to describe them as irreligious. Their language too often savoured of profanity and foolish bravado; but it was not a safe gauge to their inmost convictions. They often remained as faithful in their observance of the laws of God and of the Church as their peculiar condition, the state of the country and their dependence on others would allow.

⁸Abbé G. Dugas asserts that, "three-quarters of its clerks were English or Scotch (*L'Ouest Canadien*, p. 163). As a matter of fact, in the year 1804, which he quotes in this connection, out of seventy-two clerks in the employ of the Company, thirty-one were French.

The recital of a few daily prayers, though not general, was not a rare occurrence among them; the various feasts of the liturgical year were remembered and observed when possible; baptism was administered to infants and the dying, and those that passed away were not returned to Mother Earth without some simple religious ceremony.

"This, according to the Frenchmen, is Easter Sunday," writes James Mackenzie, no great friend of theirs, under date April 11, 1799.⁹ He goes on to state the same day: "Cadien Leblanc's wife having fallen sick. . . . Dusablon, though the *plus bête*, was ordained priest; by him the dying woman was baptized."¹⁰ Likewise Alexander Henry the younger chronicles the following year a similar recognition of a Church festival by the members of his crew, in which, for the lack of any special religious exercises or services, he had himself to concur according to the fashion of the time. "I gave my people each a dram, this day being considered among them a great fête," he writes under date November 1, 1800.¹¹ It is in a like manner that was solemnized in the west the feast of the Epiphany the following year.¹² Finally we see a more Christian-like way of celebrating the Church's festivals among his men when, under date November 1, 1810, the same trader simply remarks: "Men did not work to-day."¹³

⁹In Masson's *Les Bourgeois du Nord-Ouest*, vol. II, p. 385.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹Journal, vol. I, p. 133.

¹²*Ibid.*, *ibid.*, p. 165.

¹³*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 660.

This remembrance of the feast days so religiously kept on the shores of the St. Lawrence, coupled with the above mentioned practices, as well as extemporized discourses on God, His laws and what was known of Sacred History, could not but affect favourably the native population. It is thus that the Catholics of that forlorn period were insensibly taking the place of the missionaries, who could not be spared for the west.

Nay, even civilization, as we generally understand it, usually benefited by their presence among the dusky children of plains and forests. It is well known that, in aboriginal society, woman is scarcely more esteemed than a brute. Her chief rôle, while on the march, is to be the beast of burden of the entire family, her lord and master being too far above her to condescend to do any packing. Now here is what we read in the journal of one of the Scotch *bourgeois*, as the wintering partners of the Northwest Company were called:

"Lambert went with his *Bona Roba* to gather moss for their son.¹⁴ . . . Soon after he arrived with a huge load on his back, while *Madame* walked slowly behind, carrying nothing but her little snarling brat. *Masquasis*,¹⁵ seeing him arrive thus accoutred, observed that Lambert wanted nothing

¹⁴This material is used in connection with infants' cradles in the north.

¹⁵An Indian.

more to make him a woman than a cloak with a red lining over a black fringe."¹⁸

These and other attentions of the Canadian to the mother of his child appear to us but natural. They were not so to the natives, and were bound in time to exert an appreciably civilizing influence over the tribes.

As above stated, most of the English-speaking traders were Protestants. There were exceptions, however. One of these was the case of a John Macdonell, whose brother Miles will soon call for extended notice. John Macdonell stands out as a unique figure, stern and conscientious, amid a number of trading officers whose daily lives were in opposition to all laws of justice and decency. He was a strict Roman Catholic, and his men had surnamed him "The Priest," on account of his scrupulous observance of the Church feasts and weekly abstinence, as well as the rigidity with which he enforced it on his subordinates.

A member of a United Empire Scotch family, John became a partner of the Northwest Company about 1796, and remained in the Northwest until 1815. As early as 1793 we find him stationed in the valley of the Assiniboine, where he represented his corporation, and probably disapproved of its violently hostile proceedings against the Hudson's Bay Company. This we infer from his well-known probity and recorded conduct when in other places.

¹⁸*Les Bourgeois du Nord-Ouest*, vol. II., p. 373.

In 1806 he was at the important post his company had at Ile à la Crosse, where his competitor on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company was a Mr. Fidler, who had just come from Churchill Factory with a party of eighteen men to establish a trading station. The historian of that corporation, Willson Beckles, explicitly states that John Macdonell was then removed from his post, because he was not "inclined to set all principles of law and justice at defiance,"¹⁷ the most honourable testimonial a man in his position could ever get.¹⁸

The hostility between the Northwest and the Hudson's Bay Companies was growing more and more open, so that the latter, tired of its masterly inactivity in its original haunts, where for a long time it had awaited the native hunters instead of seeking

"The Great Company," vol. II., p. 118. London, 1900.

"In 1815 John Macdonell sold out his interests in the Northwest Company and settled at Pointe Fortune, in the Township of Hawkesbury, where he kept a store and ran boats to Montreal. In September, 1814, he was dwelling at a place called *Long Sault*, on the St. Lawrence, where he hospitably received Gabriel Franchère and his party of Astorians from far off Columbia. Exactly three years later (Sept. 17th, 1817,) he was still there, and was visited by a similar party hailing from the same quarters. Ross Cox's remarks on the quondam Westerner will bear repetition:

"Here we met another retired partner of the Northwest Company, Mr. John McDonald (*sic*), who insisted on our visiting his house. . . . This gentleman was a strict Roman Catholic, and during his residence in the Indian country, was distinguished by the Canadians from others of the same name by the title of *Le Prêtre* (priest), owing to the rigid manner in which he made his men adhere to the various fasts of the Catholic Church. . . . From this circumstance, joined to his general character among the *voyageurs*, I was led to expect in Mr. McDonald a second St. Francis; but in lieu of the austere monk, we saw in the retired trader a cheerful, healthy and contented old man—a proof, if any were wanting, that true piety and social gayety are not incompatible" ("Adventures on the Columbia River," pp. 302-3).

them out, finally resolved to carry the war into Africa. With this end in view it established posts on the upper Assiniboine (1790), at Brandon (1794), near Portage la Prairie (1796), and on the Red River (1799).

The influence of religion was sadly needed to keep within just bounds men who, emancipated from all human laws, were devoured by an unconquerable thirst for gold, represented by furs, and fought a deadly struggle for the mastery of a territory which one party claimed in virtue of a royal charter, while the other was as sure of its rights to it, which it based on a priority of discovery, and considered had been made over to Canada at the cession of the country.

But God, who knows how to draw good from evil, had decreed that the instrument in the permanent establishment of His Church in that remote wilderness was to be one who did not belong to her visible body. He also willed that the very excesses of which the traders were to render themselves guilty should be the means of hastening that establishment.

PART II.

Permanent Establishment in Middle West.

CHAPTER V.

THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT.

1811-1815.

While the two rival companies were endeavouring to oust each other from the valleys of the Red River and tributaries, a man in distant Scotland, a noble mind and a great heart, was maturing philanthropical plans to better the lot of the lower classes of his own country as well as of Ireland. Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk, having purchased a great number of shares in the Hudson's Bay Company, and secured the possession of some 110,000 square miles of land on the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, proceeded to get settlers for his proposed colony. He then entrusted the direction of this to a former officer of the King's Regiment of New York, promoted in 1796 to the rank of captain in the Canadian militia. This was Miles Macdonell, the brother of the Northwest Company partner on the Assiniboine.

Born in 1767, at Inverness, Scotland, Macdonell¹ probably came to America with his father in 1773, settling at first on the Mohawk River, and, on the breaking out of the War of Independence, removing to Canada. Miles having taken a trip to England in the first years of the nineteenth century, he made the acquaintance in London of some of the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, and, through them,



MILES MACDONELL'S SIGNATURE.

of the Earl of Selkirk. As an inducement to accept the exceedingly onerous duties of the position then offered him, he received, in addition to the half-pay of an ensign,² the grant of a large tract of land in the colony of which he was to be the governor.³

With characteristic broad-mindedness Lord Sel-

¹Whose name is variously spelt McDonell, McDonnell, and even McDonald. The reproduction in our pages of his autograph shows the correct orthography therefor.

²The rank he held in the English army.

³See Macdonell to the Earl of Selkirk, 11th Aug., 1812. Such has been the ignorance of the origins of the Canadian Middle West evidenced by most writers, that they usually set down its history as commencing with the foundation of Lord Selkirk's Settlement. Robert B. Hill has a reference, brief and unfounded on fact, to the presence there of a French missionary in the dim past ("Manitoba," p. 11); Alexander Ross has not a word of either missionaries or French explorers, any more than J. J. Hargrave or Donald Gunn. Though the latter goes back in his quaint volume to Christopher Columbus in order to trace out the history of the Canadian West, he has not a word, not even the least reference, for the brilliant achievements of the immortal Lavérendrye! It would be just as well to write the history of Eastern Canada without any mention of Champlain.

kirk had explicitly ignored all differences of creed in the selection of his colonists. Nay, he had even secured for those of the Catholic faith the services of a chaplain in the person of a Rev. Charles Bourke.

The first band of emigrants left Stornoway, in the Hebrides, on July 26, 1811, and reached York Factory, on Hudson Bay, September 24th, after a passage that was boisterous in more ways than one. The total of the party as they left "was ninety labourers and fifteen writers," or clerks destined for the Hudson's Bay Company's establishments. Among the former we find such Irish names as Costello, John Burke, Michael Bourke, Pat Flynn, Henry and Bryan Gilgan, Pat Quinn, Michael and Phil. Rooney, Davey McRooney, Jo. Walsh, Pat Corcoran, Cornelius Hoys and Sweeney.

The Irish were declared by Factor William Auld, the head of York Factory, to be unruly and unfit for the country. But almost in the same breath he betrays the secret of his aversion to them. "Their difference in a religious [point of] view," he writes, "contributes to confirm the unfriendliness of the Scotch and Orcadians [and no doubt his own] for them." On the other hand, Macdonell, who certainly ought to know them well, asserts that they "were not more troublesome than the others; the people from Glasgow were at first the most turbulent."⁴

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that there was

⁴Letter to A. Wedderburne, 5th Oct., 1811.

trouble on board the emigrants' ship, in which the Irish had a hand for reasons which appear from a letter of William Auld. Therein he refers to one William Finley as having ridiculed "the ceremonies observed in celebrating divine service by the priest (so utterly unlike our Scotch clergy). I guess," adds the trader, "that he received afterwards certain treatment which, on such an obstinate, troublesome fellow, could not fail to urge him to something improper."⁵

As the season was too far advanced, the party had to winter in temporary cabins put up on Nelson River, a few miles above the fort. During this irksome period of inaction, Macdonell became confirmed in his opinion that Mr. Bourke was not the proper person for a chaplain to his Irish and Scotch Catholics. That priest, besides being eccentric, was now reported to have left without the leave of his Ordinary, the Bishop of Killala, who was away in Dublin at the time of the ship's sailing.

Nevertheless, Rev. Mr. Bourke was not without his redeeming qualities. "He is very zealous for the increase of our colony," writes Macdonell; "he assures me that he can get thousands to come from the county of Mayo; has written very encouraging letters to his own relations, and wrote letters for almost every one of his flock to their friends in the same encouraging strain."⁶

⁵Letter dated 12th Sept., 1812.

⁶To Lord Selkirk, 1st Oct., 1811.

That these good dispositions continued in spite of the general discontent occasioned by inaction, the severity of the climate and the difficulty of securing satisfactory food, is shown by a further letter of Governor Macdonell to his illustrious patron. "The chaplain is very sanguine for the advancement of the colony, and continues to write encouraging letters home," he remarks under date May 31, 1812. "I believe he is about to write to Your Lordship and intends to offer his personal services to recruit in Ireland." Whereupon Macdonell assures the noble lord that "he may be more useful there than here. . . . I do not think that he will ever make a convert to the Catholic religion."

Yet the writer and his co-religionists could not be without the ministrations of a priest. He therefore adds: "I should not, however, wish to part with him until another was on the way to join us. I expect that hereafter there will be no difficulty in getting a priest to come out who can be well recommended." But in this anticipation Macdonell was doomed to disappointment.

Mr. Bourke returned to Ireland by the next boat. No very serious charge had been laid against him, apart from an irregular departure and eccentric ways which prevented him from having any influence over his people. It appears that he had passed a good part of his time in collecting specimens of rocks, with wonderful ideas concerning their value. In this connection Lord Selkirk wrote a year later:

"Mr. Bourke's minerals turn out to be mere *chucky stanes*. Mr. Lasserre⁷ is a much better judge of that point, and if he can find you iron ore below some hemlock swamp, I shall reckon it more valuable than all the diamonds Mr. Bourke will ever find."⁸

This first contingent of settlers, in which, as we have seen, the Catholic element was not inconsiderable,⁹ left for Red River in the early days of July, 1812, and reached its destination by the end of the following August. The second band was composed of Irishmen under the leadership of a fellow countryman, Owen Keveney, whose despotic ways were ultimately to seal his doom. This severity led to serious trouble aboard his ship, and Irish hating Auld exulted over the predicament of Keveney's people, writing to the Earl of Selkirk that "the Irishmen have shown themselves worthy of that ferocious character so long deserved by them."¹⁰

An unwelcome consequence of these difficulties was that the founder of the colony, hearing so much of the restiveness of the Irish emigrants, cancelled

⁷A surgeon who died in 1813, on the trip from Europe to Hudson Bay.

⁸To Macdonell, 12th June, 1813.

⁹A fact which seems unknown to most of the English historians, who generally give out as Scotch Protestants the emigrants who left for Red River in 1811 and 1813.

¹⁰York Factory, 12th Sept., 1812. Keveney perished miserably at the hands of the minions of the Northwest Company, who had arrested him on a charge of cruelty to his men. While he was being taken east, an Indian, acting apparently on secret orders, attempted his life several times, in which task he was as often thwarted by his two French-Canadian companions. Finally, having landed on an island, Keveney was shot, while in irons, by a halfbreed and dispatched by sabre thrusts at the hands of an ex-Meuron soldier, 9th Sept., 1816.

his orders for further canvassing in Ireland. Another result of the same intelligence was that he abandoned his plan for sending Macdonell a priest, after a failure to get one from a bishop to whom he had applied.¹¹

The number of the emigrants who left Ireland in 1812 has generally been put down at fifteen or twenty.

The third contingent for the distant settlement sailed from Scotland in 1813. It was composed of stalwart Highlanders who had resisted *vi et armis* eviction from their lands on the Sutherland estate. They were staunch Presbyterians, for whom Lord Selkirk hoped to procure a minister at the time that he would send a priest to the Catholics. He cautioned Macdonell not to do anything that could "alarm the prejudices of those people. . . . After a little personal acquaintance," he remarked, "they will be convinced that a Roman Catholic may be a very good man."¹²

These reached the Red River Valley in 1814, to the number of ninety-three.

The year 1815 witnessed the arrival in the Red River Valley of the most numerous of the emigrant parties sent by Lord Selkirk's agents. It was composed of one hundred persons of all ages, mostly from the parish of Kildonan, in Scotland. This brought to two hundred and eighty the total of all

¹¹To Macdonell, 12th June, 1813.

¹²To the same, same date.

the colonists due to the noble Lord's exertions. Thereafter accessions to their ranks were to be individual, rather than collective, cases.

Far from us the wish to belittle in the least the importance of the movement which resulted in the Red River Settlement. But when the history of Manitoba receives adequate treatment, a fact should not be forgotten which so far all authors have either ignored or left in the background. When the first of Lord Selkirk's settlers set foot in the Red River Valley, they found there, and in the vicinity, a white or halfbreed population which far exceeded in numbers all the emigrants that the earl ever sent there.

As we have seen, the personnel of the Northwest Company was made up of French Canadians and their grown-up children. Taking a leaf from its scheming antagonist, even the Hudson's Bay Company had succeeded in engaging some of them for its service. By actual computation the Canadian corporation had, in the first years of the nineteenth century, no less than three hundred and eleven French Catholic employees within the valleys of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers.¹³ Added to the few men who belonged to its English rival, and the much more numerous class of the freemen—former servants of either company, or *coureurs de bois* direct from Lower Canada¹⁴—the total of the Catholic pop-

¹³Or about twelve hundred in all its posts.

¹⁴In April, 1816, Lord Selkirk referred to them as a "great body" (Letter to the Bishop of Quebec), and, at the same date, Miles Macdonell was writing to the same party that there were "hundreds" of them.

ulation within easy reach of the new settlers must have been in the close proximity of seven hundred.

How did these old possessors of the soil receive the newcomers in 1812? The historian Alexander Ross shall answer for us. "But a few hours had passed over their heads in the land of their adoption, when an array of armed men of grotesque mould, painted, disfigured, and dressed in the savage costume of the country, warned them that they were unwelcome visitors. These crested warriors, for the most part, were employees of the Northwest Company, and as their peremptory mandate to depart was soon aggravated by the fear of perishing through want of food, it was resolved to seek refuge at Pembina, seventy miles distant."¹⁵

This treatment, most ungenerous as it was, will scarcely astonish, when we are told that the Northwest Company, which saw in the proposed settlement a danger to its supremacy in the West, moved heaven and earth to prevent its consummation. The Red River country was the natural store whence it derived the buffalo meat which was converted into pemmican¹⁶ for the victualling of its numerous posts; a colony there would inevitably result in driving away the animals that were the source of the supply. Moreover that corporation had then the upper hand over its rivals, and it meant to maintain its position at all costs; but a colony in the country would bring

¹⁵ "The Red River Settlement," p. 21. London, 1856.

¹⁶ Lean venison cut up into strips, dried, pounded and converted into a paste by means of melted fat. It was kept in skin bags.

in too many disinterested witnesses to dealings that would scarcely pass muster in civilized lands. In the third place, the settlers came under the auspices of a man who had become the main shareholder of the Hudson's Bay Company. This alone was, in the eyes of the Nor'westers, a sufficient motive for preventing its success.

Therefore those of their servants that were half-breeds employed at Fort Gibraltar, situate at the confluence of the Assiniboine with the Red River,¹⁷ had been persuaded to disguise themselves as Indians, and behave in such a way that they would strike terror into the hearts of the poor Scotch and Irish, none of whom "knew [how] to put a gun to his eye or even fired a shot" in his life.¹⁸

Now the very same men who gratified the newcomers with such hostile demonstrations were those who piloted them to Pembina, winning by their kindness the gratitude of the poor emigrants. When these reached the Red River the halfbreeds "were acting under the influence of the Northwest Company," observes Ross; "but in going to Pembina on the present occasion, they were free and acting for themselves. And here it is worthy of remark that the insolence and overbearing tone of these men when under the eye of their masters [who were Scotch gentlemen] were not more conspicuous than their kind, affable and friendly deportment towards the emigrants when following the impulse of their

¹⁷And founded in 1804.

¹⁸Macdonell to Selkirk, 1st Oct., 1811. "



A SHAMAN, OR "MEDICINE MAN."



own free-will." Hence the Scotch and Irish colonists quite naturally concluded that "when not urged on to mischief by designing men, the natural disposition of the halfbreeds is humble, benevolent, kind and sociable."¹⁹

The main difficulty that confronted Governor Macdonell was the feeding of so many mouths in a country where not an acre of wheat was probably grown before 1813. The colonists had, that year, been blessed with fair returns for their exertions in the small fields they had cultivated; but they had to wait a full twelvemonth before they could benefit by them. Moreover, new parties were coming, and it became evident that the original inhabitants were secretly instigated by the authorities of the Northwest Company to part with their provisions at exorbitant prices only.

That this heartless policy was not followed as reprisals for Macdonell's haughtiness, as the Nor'-westers afterwards pretended, is made clear by the following passage of a letter written by Wm. Auld, of York Factory, before the governor of the colony had as much as been seen on the banks of the Red River. "I know," said Auld, "that the Canadians will have a party of men on purpose to precede him [a Mr. Sinclair], to drive and alarm off the buffaloes that he [Macdonell] may be checked in his advance."²⁰

Under these circumstances, the governor, impelled

¹⁹*Op. cit.*, pp. 22, 23.

²⁰York Factory, to A. Wedderburne, 1st Oct., 1811.

by a sense of his responsibility with regard to so many people entirely dependent on him, thought proper to lay an embargo on such of the provisions in the country as were not actually required for the sustenance of the traders and their men. Claiming to represent the rights of the Earl of Selkirk over the territory, he forbade (January 8, 1814), under the penalty of confiscation the exportation of these provisions during the space of a twelvemonth. They were to be "taken for the use of the Colony," and "paid for by British bills at the customary rate."

The Nor'westers were indignant at this measure, and swore that it should not be carried out. So, in the following spring Macdonell sent, under a double escort, a man named John Spencer to seize the stores which had been accumulated at their fort on Souris River, a high-handed and possibly premature proceeding which served only to make matters worse. The Nor'westers protested, but did not make any resistance. After having broken the doors open with hatchets, Spencer's men seized 500 bags of pemmican, 100 bales of dried meat, and 96 kegs of grease; in all about 60,000 pounds of provisions, which they removed to their own establishment, Brandon House.

Another seizure was made in the winter of 1814-15, on the plains of what is now North Dakota. A party of fifteen men appropriated in the name of the governor the provisions which a French Canadian, named Desmarais, had amassed for the Northwest Company, with the help of a few servants.

These acts of violence, which special couriers brought to the knowledge of all the establishments of that concern, exasperated masters and servitors, the latter especially, who were led to believe that the organizers of the colony—Hudson's Bay Company men—had no other purpose in mind but to drive them from the country where many of them had first seen the light of day.

Unfortunately certain declarations of Lord Selkirk lent colour to these forebodings. Blinded by an excess of zeal for his great philanthropic work, he had written to one of his agents: "We must give them [the Canadian traders] solemn warning that the land belongs to the Hudson's Bay Company, and that they must remove from it; after this warning they should not be allowed to cut any timber either for building or fuel. What they have cut ought to be openly and forcibly seized, and their buildings destroyed. In like manner they should be warned not to fish in your waters, and if they put down nets, seize them as you would in England those of a poacher."²¹

This letter having fallen into the hands of one of the Northwest Company partners, served to fan the flames of discontent which were already burning at a furious rate. It is not within our province to relate all the acts of aggression and reprisals which followed. Yet for the understanding of what was to happen, events that led to the final establishment of

²¹Gunn, "History of Manitoba," p. 112. Ottawa, 1880.

the Church in the northwest, it is necessary to mention that a warrant was issued for the arrest of Governor Macdonell, who at first ignored it as being *ultra vires*. Then, on June 25, 1815, the Hudson's Bay Company post on Red River, Fort Douglas, about two miles below the junction of the two streams, was attacked by a troop of halfbreeds under English leaders, at the instigation of the Northwest Company, after nine field pieces had been forcibly taken therefrom during an absence of Miles Macdonell. The outcome of this affray was the wounding of four of the fort's men, one of whom died on the morrow. Another consequence was the dispersion of the settlers, who had to leave for Lake Winnipeg and Scotland, while others were taken to Canada.

Shortly thereafter a band of twenty French Canadians, some of whom had their wives with them, arrived from the east under the lead of a Colin Robertson, a gentleman who had passed from the service of the Northwest to that of the Hudson's Bay Company. That same Robertson immediately coaxed the settlers who had reached Lake Winnipeg into returning to their fields under a promise of protection. Then the band of 100 colonists already referred to arrived with a gentleman, Robert Semple, who had been entrusted with the supervision of all the Hudson's Bay Company's interests in Northern America.

CHAPTER VI.

A CLOUDBURST WITH ULTIMATELY GOOD RESULTS.

1816-1817.

Exhausted by the multiplicity of his cares and the difficulties everyone seemed to throw in his path,¹ Captain Macdonell had asked² to be relieved of his functions, and then had surrendered himself into the hands of his opponents, who took him to Montreal to undergo a trial which never took place. His services, however, were considered too valuable to be dispensed with, and when, in the spring of 1816, he returned to Red River, he remained governor of the colony, while Robert Semple, now his superior, was

¹For instance, he had to bear all the odium of his measure against the exportation of provisions, after the same had been suggested and unanimously approved at York Factory. "It was the decided opinion of every person at York Factory that such a measure would be highly proper. You then *expressed yourself strongly* in favour of it," wrote Macdonell to Auld, who cowardly disavowed all responsibility in the matter, after he had written Macdonell: "I do entirely agree with you in the propriety and justice of preventing the provisions being carried out of your territory without your license, especially after you have given due warning."

²Sept. 2nd, 1814. That Macdonell's services were appreciated by his patron in Scotland is shown by this remark of Lord Selkirk: "The address with which you managed the Highlanders and Irishmen, showing that the latter are not so utterly untamable as some people would have us believe, demands my warmest approbation and leads me to entertain flattering anticipations of the result when you are placed in more favourable circumstances" (14th June, 1813).

Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company in America.⁸

On March 17, 1816, Colin Robertson, acting governor of the colony during his absence, caused the arrest of Duncan Cameron, a Northwest Company partner, who had been the leading spirit in all the recent machinations of that body, notably in the dispersion of the settlers. Then under pretext of recovering the cannon that belonged to Fort Douglas, he took and razed to the ground Fort Gibraltar, the headquarters of the Nor'westers in the country.

By these open acts of violence it is easy to see that the wrongs were not confined to one side. But we may be permitted to remark that, when following their own inclinations and not misled by their employers, the French stood for peace and legality. The defender of Fort Douglas, when it was so unwarrantedly attacked in June, 1815, plainly states that he secured "the services of free men about the place—French Canadians and halfbreeds not in the service of the Northwest Company—to restore matters and prepare for the future."⁹ Moreover it is

⁸This is a fact which most authors have overlooked. Even Alexander Ross, in his "List of the Governors of the Red River Colony from the year 1812 to the year 1855" (in "The Red River Settlement," p. 410), says that, in August, 1815, he was succeeded by Alexander McDonell. Yet we shall presently see him asking for priests for the colony as late as April, 1816, and on the 24th of January, 1817, he wrote from Fort Douglas to Cuthbert Grant a letter which he signed: Miles Macdonell, Governor, and which is reproduced in *extenso*, p. 158 of the "Report of the Proceedings connected with the Disputes between the Earl of Selkirk and the Northwest Company." He was therefore fully five years governor of the colony, instead of two years and ten months, as Ross would have it.

⁹Bryce, "History of the Hudson's Bay Company," p. 223.

on record that when the so-called free men felt the final storm approaching, they made off for the plains, in order to have no part in it.

This came but too soon. Convinced that Lord Selkirk's directions concerning the expulsion of the Nor'westers were indeed being followed, and that the double seizure of provisions, the destruction of Fort Gibraltar, the taking of Fort Pembina and the imprisoning of its inmates, as well as the attack on Fort Qu'Appelle, which, however, had been successfully resisted, were but part of a plan of extermination, the Northwest Company resolved to go to extremes, in order to save their existence and protect their interests in a land where they had long reigned as almost undisputed masters.

For this purpose they gathered as many half-breeds and French Canadians as they could, and even went to the length of courting the services of the Indians, in order to strike a decisive blow at Hudson's Bay Company domination. An expedition with two cannon was dispatched from their headquarters, Fort William, on Lake Superior, which was to reach a point below Fort Douglas by June 16, 1816.⁵ Another band, composed mainly of French and English halfbreeds with a few French Canadians, aggregating sixty-four persons accompanied by six Indians, was to join them on the same day. Then the combined force would make a desperate attack on Fort Douglas.

⁵This arrived only on the 20th of that month.

In order to pass unperceived, and the more quietly effect their junction with the Fort William brigade, the corps of halfbreeds, which was led by a Cuthbert Grant, had been cautioned to keep as far as possible from the Hudson's Bay Company post. But the swampy nature of the soil forced them to pass within sight of the sentinel, who, noticing that they were mounted and armed, made this circumstance known to Governor Semple.

It was in the afternoon of June 19, 1816.

"We must go and meet these men," declared the governor. "Let twenty men follow me."

This was no doubt a rash move, one which nothing but ignorance of the people and the desperate counsels they were acting on could excuse. Instead of sending out scouts to reconnoitre, Semple went out with twenty-seven men. When a short distance from the fort, perceiving that the horsemen were more numerous than he had thought, he sent for a piece of cannon. This, however, being too slow in coming, the governor proceeded to meet the halfbreeds.

At the sight of the English party, the representatives of the Canadian company drew themselves up in the form of a half-moon. Then one of them, a clerk named François F. Boucher, advanced towards the governor, making signs that he wanted to speak.

"What do you want?" he asked when within speaking distance.

"What do you want yourselves?" said Semple.

"We want our fort," answered Boucher.

"Well, go to your fort."

"You rascal, you have destroyed it," cried out the Canadian.

The two men were now close to one another. On being addressed in this coarse strain, the governor, who was of a refined nature and had always been treated with consideration, could not contain his indignation.

"Scoundrel!" he exclaimed, "do you tell me so?"

Which saying he caught with one hand the bridle of Boucher's horse, and laid the other on his gun. Then, turning to some of his men:

"Make him prisoner," he said.⁶

Thereupon the Nor'wester jumped off to the ground. At the same time a shot was fired, which killed one of the English officers, a Mr. Holt. Boucher then returned to his friends, and almost immediately the governor fell, wounded. At the sight of the consequences of his imprudence he cried out:

"Do what you can to take care of yourselves."

But the shooting was now general. As Semple's men, instead of acting on his advice, persisted in surrounding their master to ascertain the extent of the harm done him, they became an easy target for the halfbreeds. In a short time they were all dead

⁶In her valuable work, "The Conquest of the Great Northwest," vol. II, p. 172, Agnes C. Laut makes François Firmin Boucher the "son of the scout shot on the South Saskatchewan." The erudite author must be mistaken in this, as the contemporaneous records expressly say that his father was a respectable proprietor of Montreal.

or wounded, with the exception of five or six who had managed to retire from the battlefield.

Sad to relate, most of the wounded were massacred by the infuriated Indians. Even some half-breeds stooped to the rôle of butchers of their fellow men. Thus a Mr. Rogers was killed by a Scotch halfbreed as he begged for mercy.

Meanwhile the governor was lying on his side, with his thigh broken and supporting his head on his hand.

"Are you not Mr. Grant?" he asked a passing halfbreed.

Receiving an affirmative answer, Semple went on to say:

"I am not mortally wounded, and if you could get me conveyed to the fort, I think I could live."

Cuthbert Grant promised to do so, and left him in the care of a kind French Canadian. But just then an Indian came up.

"You dog, you are the cause of the whole trouble; take this," he grunted, as he shot poor Semple in the breast.

Not far from there, an Englishman named John Pritchard was about to be slain. In the twinkling of an eye, he recognized a French Canadian among those who surrounded him.

"Lavigne," he prayed, calling him by his name, "you are a Frenchman, you are a man, you are a Christian. For God's sake, save my life. I give myself up; I am your prisoner."

This pathetic appeal was not lost on the Canadian. Placing himself between Pritchard and his assailants, Lavigne succeeded, at the peril of his own life, to draw him away to a place of safety.⁷

The storm which had been brewing for so many years, beyond the soothing influence of religion, had at last swept over the land. The cloudburst resulted in twenty-one killed on the one side,⁸ and one, with four wounded, on the other. Moreover Fort Douglas had to be evacuated, in order to prevent a massacre which Cuthbert Grant freely threatened.

Such was the unfortunate affair which became known in history as the Battle of Seven Oaks.⁹

"The foregoing dialogues and accompanying details are strictly historical. Their authenticity is fully warranted by the sworn depositions of witnesses and participants, as well as other contemporaneous sources. John Pritchard was born (1777) in Shropshire, England, though some call him a Scotchman. After some years passed in the service of the Northwest Company, he cast in his lot with its rivals in 1815. Later on he became a member of the Council of Assiniboia, and died at Kildonan in 1856.

"Of whom at least seven were Irish. Mr. J. P. Bourke, the store-keeper, was wounded, but escaped death by flight. He was shortly after caught by a Mr. McLeod, of the Northwest Company, who made him prisoner and sent him to Fort William.

"The fate of Semple and his companions is certainly calculated to claim our sympathy. Yet such a sentiment should not interfere with the historian's duty to give everyone his due, as we believe it has in the cases of such writers as G. Dugas and G. Bryce. Despite the fact that there was undeniable premeditation on the part of the Northwest Company, it is quite clear that the governor of the rival body had to blame his own rashness for that melancholy event. Apart from his imprudence in sallying out of his fort without having ascertained the intentions of the halfbreeds or even attempted to make sure of their numbers, he had previously answered by what we cannot help calling bravado the undisguised threats of his adversaries. Thus, on March 23, 1816, we find him writing from Brandon, in a curt note to Alexander McDonell, a Northwest Company partner: "I suspect that your associates have mistaken my character. Remember what I now say to you: Should you, or your Indian or black-breed (*sic*) allies,

Apprized of this crowning disaster to his pet colony, Lord Selkirk, who had come to Eastern Canada, at once levied a troop of disbanded soldiers called Meurons after one of their former colonels, hastened with them to Fort William, which he captured, and then made for Red River, where he arrived three months after his men, that is, in the last week of June, 1817. Then, after having retaken Fort Douglas, he applied himself to the task of settling up matters that had lain in abeyance, extinguished by treaties the Indian title to his territory, and offered lands therein to the soldiers who chose to stay.

Many of these were Catholics, and among them were Germans, French, Italians and Swiss. It is perhaps for this reason that Alexander Ross terms them "a rough and lawless set of blackguards."¹⁰ Yet, as late as July 26th of the preceding year, the Governor of Canada, Sir John Sherbrooke, had publicly congratulated them "on having by their conduct in the Canadas, maintained the reputation which they had deservedly acquired by their former services," mentioning especially as worthy of all

attempt any violence against the Hudson's Bay Company at Qu'Appelle or elsewhere, the consequences to yourselves will be terrible." Again, on May 14th of the same year, he thus ends a longer letter to the same party: "I also, should I be compelled to it, have my schemes of farther and still farther retaliation, the shock of which, if I mistake not, should be felt from Athabasca to Montreal" ("Report of the Proceedings connected with the Disputes between the Earl of Selkirk and the North-West Company," p. 113. London, 1819).

¹⁰ "The Red River Settlement," p. 41.

praise "the steadiness, discipline and efficiency of these corps."¹¹

Most of the Meurons that remained in the country were Germans. They settled on what is now called the Seine River (St. Boniface), which for some time was known for that reason as German Creek.

It was now but too evident to the Earl of Selkirk that, without the powerful arm of religion, the best plans for an undertaking like his would come to naught. For six weary years he had been obliged to go on without the aid of even one clergyman among his colonists and the restless population in the midst of which they had established themselves. The results had been most disastrous. And now that the ranks of the Catholics had been swollen by the arrival of French Canadian families and the accession of his Meurons, the people of that faith must number some three-quarters of the entire population. A Catholic priest, therefore, he must have at any cost, if the work of his heart is to be endowed with any degree of stability.

For the lack of any ordained clergyman, Miles Macdonell had seen himself in the necessity of acting in that capacity whenever this was possible. "I married last winter two young men of our servants to the daughters of settlers and baptized four infant children born among us," he wrote to His Lordship on July 25, 1814. Then came the invariable refrain: "I trust the arrival of some clergyman soon will

¹¹Bryce, "History of the Hudson's Bay Company," p. 239.

relieve me from the performance of this awful task."¹²

This clergyman, it was now evident, should not be sought in Ireland. Besides the failure to find one there which Lord Selkirk had already confessed, there was the question of language, as well as that of jurisdiction. These vast countries, though ecclesiastically unorganized, were under the Bishop of Quebec. Then at least nine-tenths of the Catholics there contained had French for their mother tongue.

Fortunately there was then at the head of that important diocese a man who had nothing so much at heart as the extension of the kingdom of God, Monseigneur Joseph Octave Plessis, a superior mind, who was as zealous for the conversion of souls in foreign or distant parts as for the sanctification of those nearer home. He had already turned his eyes towards the west, and, as early as 1815, he had made overtures to the Northwest Company with a view to obtaining the necessary facilities for a missionary trip to Lac la Pluie, or Rainy Lake. He had originally intended to take this task upon himself; but circumstances forced him to entrust it with one of his priests.

After consulting with Mr. McGillivray and other magnates of the Northwest Company, he had received a satisfactory reply from Mr. Angus Shaw, writing in the name of the great corporation.¹³

¹²Which is good evidence that the first baptisms and marriages performed in Manitoba were celebrated according to the Catholic rite.

¹³Montreal, 7th Nov., 1815.

This journey was to take place in the summer of 1816. But before the bishop could execute his project, Miles Macdonell addressed him in the early spring a letter which caused a change in his plans. After thanking Providence for the preservation of the infant colony by the banks of the Red River, "notwithstanding the unparalleled barbarities practised to effect its annihilation," the governor went on to plead thus:

"You know, Monseigneur, that there can be no stability in the government of states or kingdoms unless religion is made the corner-stone. The leading motive of my first undertaking the management of that arduous, tho' laudable, enterprise, was to have made the Catholic religion the prevailing faith of the establishment, should Divine Providence think me a worthy instrument to forward the design. The Earl of Selkirk's liberal mind readily acquiesced in bringing out along with me the first year a priest from Ireland. Your Lordship already knows the unfortunate result of that first attempt.

"Our spiritual wants increase with our numbers; we have many Catholics from Scotland and Ireland,¹⁴ and besides those Canadians are always with us; we are to have a vast accession from here. There are hundreds of free Canadians wandering about our colony, who have families with Indian women, all of whom are in the most deplorable state for want

¹⁴A further proof that our claim is well founded that the number of Catholics among the original emigrants from Europe to the Red River was not inconsiderable.

of spiritual aids. A vast religious harvest might also be made among the natives round us, whose language is that of the Algonquins of this country, and who are tractable and well disposed considering the corruption of morals introduced among them by opposition traders and other corruptive habits.

"I have learnt with great pleasure that you are sending two missionaries this year as far as Lac la Pluie. I shall be happy to afford a passage from here¹⁵ in my canoe to one of these gentlemen as far as Red River, which is only six days' journey from there, and should he remain permanently with us, the concern shall furnish him a suitable conveyance once a year to meet his fellow labourers in the Christian vineyard at Lac la Pluie."¹⁶

These were indeed Christian sentiments! The noble founder of the colony, Lord Selkirk himself, though not a Catholic, did not deem it beneath his dignity to join in them, and to strongly second Macdonell's request in a communication which accompanied his letter. "I am fully persuaded of the infinite good which might be effected by a zealous and intelligent ecclesiastic among these people [the Canadians], among whom the sense of religion is almost entirely lost," he wrote. "It would give me very great satisfaction to coöperate to the utmost of

¹⁵Montreal.

¹⁶Montreal, 4th April, 1816. Miles Macdonell left Red River in the course of 1817, and died in 1828, on a farm he had acquired at Osna-burg, Upper Canada. The terrible experiences he had gone through left on his mind an indelible impress which probably hastened his death.

my power in so good a work; and if Your Lordship will select a suitable person to undertake it, I can have no difficulty in assuring him of every accommodation and support which Your Lordship may judge necessary."

Such earnest appeals could not be left unheeded. Bishop Plessis answered by the next courier that, pursuant to his laudable designs, the Rev. Pierre A. Tabeau, a Canadian priest "of robust health, serious character, remarkable intelligence, full of zeal and good will," would accompany Mr. Macdonell as far as Red River, in a voyage of observation, and with orders to report on the advisability of establishing there a permanent mission.¹⁷

Rev. Pierre Antoine Tabeau was a native of Montreal, where he was born in the course of 1782. Ordained priest, October, 1805, after a somewhat boisterous youth, at the end of which his real merit had triumphed over dispositions which had first induced his superiors to fear for his vocation,¹⁸ he was named one of the curates of the cathedral parish of Quebec, where he likewise filled the post of organist. Then he was appointed parish priest of Ste.

¹⁷To Lord Selkirk, 8th April, 1816.

¹⁸Rev. Mr. Roux, Vicar-General of Montreal, had the following concerning Tabeau in a letter to Bishop Plessis (24th May, 1803): "He seemed a little dissipated; but after all, I believe he will become a good subject. If in good company, he will prove a fervent priest." Over two years later the vicar-general was glad to see that he had been a good prophet. In a letter to the same prelate, dated 13th Oct., 1805, he says: "We have all been most edified by his conduct during his stay at Montreal, especially in the course of the retreat. That young man has talent, health, virtue, and the probability is that he will render service to the Church."

Anne des Plaines, which he reached by the end of 1810. Three years later (September, 1813), he was transferred to St.-Jean-Port-Joli, and received afterwards an appointment to the parish of Boucherville.

Bishop Plessis advised in due time Mr. A. Shaw of his change of plans, and told him of the proposed journey to the seat of the unhappy divisions, adding, as if to forestall objections on the part of the Northwest Company: "The angel of peace I send you has for mission to make himself useful to all, without siding with any."¹⁰

Conformably to this plan, Rev. Mr. Tabeau left for the Red River; but, having learned at Rainy Lake of the massacre of June 19th, he thought it perfectly useless to go and broach the subject of a Catholic mission in a land tormented by such discord. Returning east, he took his time before sending in his report, which was adverse to any permanent establishment at Red River. Periodical visitations, he thought, were to be sufficient under the circumstances.

But the very reasons which deterred Tabeau from the idea of a foundation strongly urged the Earl of Selkirk to leave no stone unturned until one was secured. Before the priest's document could reach the Bishop of Quebec, Lord Selkirk who, as we have seen, had gone to the Red River in the summer of 1817, caused a formal petition for missionaries to

¹⁰May 6th, 1816.

be circulated in his colony and forwarded to Mgr. Plessis. Therein a reference was made to the unfortunate occurrences of the past year, the burden of which was laid at the doors of the employers of the halfbreeds, as the latter had been made to believe that it was their bounden duty to drive away the English before they were driven off by them. Nearly all the Christian population, either Canadian free-men or new settlers, were of the Roman Catholic faith, it was declared. Hence the bishop was besought to send them a priest.

This document was signed by twenty French Canadians and three Scotchmen. It was witnessed to by a Louis Nolin and Mr. Pierre Chrysologue Pambrun, one of the principal clerks of the Hudson's Bay Company, who had been arrested by the Nor'westers a few days before the Battle of Seven Oaks. A Mr. Samuel Gale was entrusted with the petition, who added his prayers to those of the signers, and suggested that a subscription be forthwith started on behalf of the proposed mission.²⁰

Coming after such highly recommended entreaties, Mr. Tabeau had little chance of obtaining the ear of the bishop. In spite of his temporizing counsels, Mgr. Plessis wrote him, March 8, 1818, that he now realized it was a permanent mission that was needed, remarking at the same time: "If, in order to labour for the salvation of these poor Christians we must wait until both companies have sealed a peace which

²⁰Samuel Gale to Bishop Plessis, 29th Jan., 1818.

probably neither thinks it in its interests to seek, nothing will be done before ten years, and perhaps more."

Bishop Plessis may appear pessimistic to such as do not fully grasp the situation of that distracted land at the time he was writing. No one could then have foreseen that within three years all sources of trouble would have been eliminated by the fusion of the two contending parties into one homogeneous body under the name of the Hudson's Bay Company. But it is within the bounds of probabilities that the Catholic mission contributed largely towards the happy result by rendering impossible such acts of violence as had disgraced whites and halfbreeds alike. A peaceful contest being practically out of the question, the disappearance of one of the two companies was a matter of necessity.²¹

The outcome of it all was the sending west of the two priests that were to found the Church of St. Boniface.

²¹The coalition of the two companies took place on March 26th, 1821.

CHAPTER VII.

FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH OF ST. BONIFACE. 1818-1820.

The man who was to be God's instrument in establishing the Church in the Middle West was the Rev. Joseph Norbert Provencher. Born at Nicolet, in Lower Canada, February 12, 1787, he had been ordained to the priesthood on December 21, 1811, and had at first filled the office of assistant to the curé of a parish in the city of Quebec. In 1814 he had been appointed to the parish of Pointe Claire, near Montreal, and two years later Mgr. Plessis promoted him to that of Kamouraska. He was at the head of that parish when he received the first intimation that his ecclesiastical superior had cast his eyes on him for the direction of the remote Red River mission.

This was indeed a far from tempting offer. All Canada was afire with the reports of the atrocities committed in the west: would he have tact enough to steer his bark clear of the reefs that must lay in wait for the mariner in that sea of endless conflicts? Moreover he was not familiar with English; could scarcely travel on account of a painful infirmity; had debts which he was in honour bound to pay without delay, while the insufficiency of tithes that year made

this an impossibility. Nevertheless, he was willing to second the views of his bishop; for, he said, "if that mission was postponed on my account, I should apprehend reproaches from God and men."¹

But Mr. Provencher was the elect of Bishop Plessis. He had therefore to submit, and press back into his heart the protestations of his humility. As soon as a companion had been found for him in the person of Rev. Joseph Nicolas Sévère Dumoulin,² the Bishop of Quebec sent to all the parish priests of his immense diocese—then the only one within the whole of Canada—a circular asking for contributions towards the establishment of the Red River mission.³ Then he bestowed on Mr. Provencher the powers of a vicar-general, and addressed to the two missionaries full directions as to the line of conduct they were to follow in the pursuance of their sacred enterprise.⁴

¹Kamouraska, 15th March, 1818. Provencher's debts amounted to £252.12.9. It speaks well for the esteem in which he was held at Kamouraska that one of his parishioners, a Mr. A. Dionne, then wrote to Mgr. Plessis: "I have never craved so much for wealth as at this time, in order that I might set him at ease on that score" (*Histoire des Familles Têtu, Bonenfant, Dionne et Perrault, par Mgr. Henri Têtu*, p. 467. Quebec, 1898). Yet, humanly speaking, Provencher might have had reasons of his own to wish for a change in the scene of his labours; for at Kamouraska he had encountered the opposition of a few busybodies who had thwarted his plans. But Mr. Dionne positively stated in the same letter: "The tears which were shed in the church . . . when respectable Mr. Provencher announced his departure for Red River are unmistakable tokens of the good he has done in this parish during the short time he has directed it. They have well proved that he is regretted by all, without excepting those who tormented him last year."

²Born at Ste. Anne, Isle of Montreal, 5th Dec., 1793, and ordained 23rd Feb., 1817. He had studied at the Seminary of Nicolet.

³March 29th, 1818.

⁴April 20th, 1818.

The future apostles were expected to learn the dialects of their Indian neophytes and prepare grammars and dictionaries of the same. They will have to regularize the unions of the French Canadians with native women; preach the word of God and strive to enforce His laws; but above all they shall watch with a jealous eye over the education of youth, and establish schools wherever practicable. Then the preacher of the famous sermon on the defeat of the French forces by Nelson's squadron^s reveals himself in the ninth clause of their "marching orders": "They shall tell the people of the advantages they enjoy in living under the government of His Britannic Majesty, teaching them by word and example the respect and fidelity they owe to the Sovereign."⁸

And as it was feared lest the Northwest Company should try to thwart the work of conciliation of the two priests, the prelate obtained from them testimonials from Sir John Cape Sherbrooke, "Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief in and over the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada." These

⁸Ever since the cession of Canada to Great Britain the Bishops of Quebec had never succeeded in having their title recognized by the English authorities. They were even forbidden to assume it officially. Rev. J. O. Plessis, who had been named coadjutor to the bishop of that city, preached that sermon with a view to conciliating the English element in Canada. For the first time since the end of the French regime he had the bishop called by his official name on the pamphlet which contained the prelate's mandement, or pastoral charge, together with his own sermon.

⁹We shall have many a fact to record which goes to show how faithfully this direction was followed by the representatives of the Catholic Church in the Middle West of Canada.

were dated April 29, 1818. Owing to the importance of the party that delivered them, we hereby reproduce them from the original:

"Whereas the Reverends Joseph Norbert Provencher, Severe Joseph Nicolas Dumoulin and Guillaume Etienne Edge have been appointed by the most Reverend the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec as missionaries to the Red River and the adjacent Indian territories, . . . I do hereby call on all His Majesty's subjects, civil and military, and do request all other persons whomsoever to whom these Presents shall come not only to permit the said missionaries to pass without hindrance or molestation, but to render them all good offices, assistance and protection wherever they shall find it necessary to go in the exercise of their holy calling."

Moreover, at the suggestion of Lord Selkirk, who feared the hostility of the Northwest Company and its agents, the same Governor of both Canadas gave them for escort Captain the Chevalier Charles de Lorimier, of the Indian Department, a man who was known and respected by everybody. Then, the better to ensure the future of the mission they were to found, the noble lord endowed it, "in consideration of the sum of five shillings of good and lawful money of the Province of Lower Canada," with a seignory of five miles by four at the mouth of the Seine River on the east side of the Red, nearly opposite to the

"In the indenture signed on the 19th of May, it is stated that the grant was made "in consideration of the sum of five pounds."



His Excellency Sir John Coape
Therbrooke C. B. Captain General
and Governor in Chief in and over the
Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada
and Commander of His Majesty's Forces
therein &c &c &c

To all to whom these Presents shall come

Whereas the Reverend Joseph Norbert
Provancher, Sene Joseph Nicolas Dumoulin, and
Guillaume Etienne Edger, have been appointed by
the Most Reverend the Roman Catholic Bishop of
Quebec to proceed as Missionaries to the Red Rivers
and the adjacent Indian Territories that to disseminate
the Christian Religion and to afford to the inhabitants
the benefit of the Rites thereof Now know ye that
being desirous of furthering so pious and useful works
and of affording the fullest protection and support in
my power to the persons engaged in it, I do hereby
call on all His Majesty's Subjects Civil and Military
and do request all other Persons whomsoever to whom
these Presents shall come not only to permit the said
Missionaries to pass without hindrance or molestation
but to render them all good offices assistance and
protection wherever they shall find it necessary to go
in the exercise of their holy calling.

Given under my hand and Seal at Arms at the Castle
of St Lewis in the City of Quebec this Twenty ninth day
of April in the Year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred
and eight and in the fifty eighth Year of His Majesty's reign

By His Excellency's Command
Charles W. Coape
Secretary

Par Son Excellence Sir John Coape
Therbrooke C. B. Capitaine General
et Gouverneur en Chef dans et sur les
Provinces du Haut et du Bas Canada
et Commandant des Troupes de sa Majesté
dans celles — &c &c &c

A Tous ceux que les Presents verranno

Mander que les Reverends Joseph Norbert
Provancher Sene Joseph Nicolas Dumoulin, et
Guillaume Etienne Edger, ont été nommés par le
Reverendissime Evêque Catholique de Québec pour se
rendre à la Rivière Rouge et aux Territoires Indiens
adjacents en qualité de Missionnaires pour y répandre
la Religion Chrétienne et procurer aux habitants les
avantages de ses Rites Sacher donc que désirant
favoriser une œuvre si pieuse et si utile et
accorder aux personnes qui y sont engagées toute
la protection et le soutien qui sont en mon pouvoir
J'envoie par les présentes à tous Les Sujets de sa
Majesté Civile et Militaire et à tous les autres toutes
sortes d'assistance et de protection pour leur permettre
de passer sans obstacle ou
molestation par les lieux par où ils devront passer
et de leur rendre tous les bons offices
et la protection dont ils auront besoin pour aller dans
leurs saintes fonctions.

Donné sous mon Sceau et le Sceau de mes Armes au Châteaust
Louis dans la Cité de Québec le vingt neuvième jour d'Avril dans
l'année de notre Seigneur mille huit cent dix huit et dans la
cinquante huitième année de notre Règne de sa Majesté —

J. Therbrooke

Par ordre de son Excellence
A. W. Coape
Secrétaire



mouth of the Assiniboine. To this he added, on the west side of the Red, a piece of land fifteen chains square.

This measure was, of course, intended for the benefit of the mission itself, not for interests of a private nature. But to the persons of the missionaries themselves Lord Selkirk gave unmistakable marks of esteem during a stay they had to make in Montreal, while they were getting everything in readiness for their momentous journey. Nor was he alone in his kind attentions to them. Lady Selkirk herself left nothing untried in order to be of assistance to them. "I never saw a lady so learned, so witty and so obliging," wrote Mr. Dumoulin to his bishop. "She has gone beyond all bounds in order to get us all we might need, and this with such a constantly good grace that all her attentions are thereby doubled in value. It seems that Milord never does anything without consulting her."⁸ Provencher was not less sensible to the lady's kindness. "The Countess of Selkirk has prepared us a beautiful chapel," he writes, "and she proposes to do even more."⁹

It is simple justice to the memory of the noble couple that the Catholics of the west and elsewhere should know what their Church owes to them.

Thus provided with safeguards against all pos-

⁸Montreal, 30th Aug., 1818.

⁹Montreal, 1818 (no other date). A chapel is, in missionary parlance, a set of priestly vestments and all the other requisites to say mass with.

sible obstacles, the two missionaries, with their young assistant, bade farewell to Montreal, May 19, 1818. Their route lay along the Ottawa, which they ascended until the Mattawa was reached; then through Lake Nipissing to Lakes Huron and Superior as far as Fort William. After the Kaministiquia had been poled up to the height of land, there was a succession of unconnected sheets of water necessitating long and tedious portages to Cross Lake. Thence progress was more easy, as they had only to descend the streams and traverse Lakes la Pluie (or Rainy) and of the Woods to the mouth of the Winnipeg River. After some thirty miles of canoeing to the mouth of the Red, this was ascended to the point of destination.

At Lake Nipissing Messrs. Provencher and Dumoulin had a foretaste of the morals introduced among the Indians by the rivalry of the traders. The dusky children of the lakes were very civil; in return for the good counsels of the priests they offered them fish and asked for . . . rum, loudly manifesting their surprise when told that the latter had none.

June 20th they reached the famous Fort William, where the commander, Mr. de Rocheblave, greeted them with the powerful voice of his cannon!

The sixteenth of that same month was indeed a red letter day for the Catholics of Red River. A motley crowd of all ages and conditions, mostly French Canadians and halfbreeds, had been gath-

ered by special courier, and thronged the grounds of Fort Douglas. Suddenly, at about five o'clock in the afternoon, two canoes were seen painfully poling up the river.

"Here they are!" cried a voice on top the bank.

"Here they are!" repeated a hundred throats by the fort.

Useless to explain that *they* were the missionaries, who shortly afterwards briskly walked up in their black robes, kindly and smiling to the people that were to be their flock. Both priests were of a commanding presence, tall and of a gentlemanly bearing.¹⁰ They made a profound impression on everybody, not excepting Alexander Macdonell, who had succeeded Miles Macdonell at the head of the colony. After they had addressed a few words to the Canadians and others, some of whom wept for joy at the sight of the almost forgotten ecclesiastical costume, while the halfbreeds were awe-struck at the appearance and deportment of the men of God, the governor of the colony tendered them a generous, though necessarily frugal, hospitality. Prior to their leaving the east, the two priests had beaten up recruits for the Hudson's Bay Company and the colony among the French Canadians.¹¹ As a result of their exertions seven large canoes with about forty Canadians, some with their families, followed the missionaries, under the lead of a John McLeod.

¹⁰Provencher was six feet four and very handsome.

¹¹John McLeod's Memoir.

Je me ferai toujours un devoir de vous accompagner à votre grand
desir les observations que vous et les curés de la paroisse m'adresserez.
à portée de vous les faire connaître, en attendant qu'en cas de plus
interruptions après, je vous en avertisse. En attendant, permettre
que je me souviens avec le plus profond respect

Devotement grandeur

Le très humble

très obéissant serviteur

Provencher prestre vicar general

Dur Fort Douglas
à la Nouvelle-Angle
le 13 Aout 1868.

"This is indeed a fine country," wrote Rev. Mr. Provencher; "the river is fairly large. It has a border of oaks, elms, poplars, aspens, etc. Beyond this fringe of wood extend prairies as far as the eye can reach. . . . The soil seems excellent."

This was written to Bishop Plessis, on the morrow of the missionaries' arrival. Mr. Provencher waited a little in order to be in a position to take in the situation from a moral standpoint. It was not encouraging. Speaking of the native population, he wrote on September 13, 1818: "It can be said without hesitation that their commerce with the whites, instead of advancing them towards civilization, has served only to drive them away therefrom, because the whites have spoiled their morals by the strong drinks of which the natives are extraordinarily fond, and they have taught them debauchery by their bad examples. Most of the employees have children by women whom they afterwards send away to the first newcomer. . . . All the clerks and *bourgeois* likewise have squaws, and, what is worse, no more care is taken of the children born of these would-be marriages than if they had no souls."¹²

TRANSLATION.

I shall ever consider it a duty to communicate to Your Lordship the observations which time and circumstances will allow me henceforth to make. Pending some more interesting to send to Your Lordship, permit me to subscribe myself with the most profound respect,

Of Your Lordship the most humble and most obedient servant,
Provencher, priest, vicar-general.

From Fort Douglass, at Red River, the 13th of August, 1818.

¹²Fort Douglas, 13th Sept., 1818.

This state of things on the banks of the Red River forebode plenty of work and perhaps some trouble for the missionaries. But they welcomed work. Their first care was to provide themselves with some sort of habitation, wherein to pass the winter. With logs of aspen they built a house fifty by thirty, part of which was at first utilized as a chapel. Less than two months after their arrival, they had already baptized no less than seventy-two children, one of whom was a little Sauteux girl who died shortly after her baptism; so that it was to an Indian that they first opened the gates of heaven.¹³

At that date, August 12, 1818, they were still busy preparing other children for their admission into the Church, and instructing the Indian women with a view to baptizing and marrying them. The squaws proved to be of good-will, but slow in learning on account of their generally advanced age and imperfect knowledge of French.

On the day that Provancher was thus describing the work of the missionaries, the French Canadians they had recruited for the west in Lower Canada came up. They intended to settle in the proximity of Fort Douglas. But clouds of grasshoppers had just swarmed over the doomed colony, and eaten up the crops that had so far been full of promise. Discouraged at the sight of the havoc, they made for Pembina, about sixty miles up the Red River. Mr.

¹³The second burial, the first of an adult, was that of the son of the interpreter Brousse, which took place on Aug. 29th, 1818.

Provencher found himself in the necessity of sending thither his confrère, Rev. Mr. Dumoulin, with the young ecclesiastic Edge. Pembina being nearer to the haunts of the buffalo, contained already quite a population of French Canadians and halfbreeds. Mr. Dumoulin put his hand to the plough with a will, and, not content with instructing the people in the science of heaven, he imparted to them some knowledge of the things of the earth by means of a school managed by his companion, Mr. Edge. This soon boasted some sixty pupils, and could have counted eighty but for the distance of the buffalo herds which the parents had to follow.¹⁴

His zeal for the instruction of his people carried him still further. Having come upon a young Canadian named Legacé, who had had a fairly good education, he induced some of the freemen of the plains to engage his services as a school teacher to their children. Legacé went to winter in one of the largest camps, and he soon had more pupils than even Mr. Edge.¹⁵

At Pembina, by the beginning of 1819, Mr. Dumoulin had conferred fifty-two baptisms and rehabilitated a number of marriages among the three hundred persons he had with him. The vicar-general (Mr. Provencher) could not, therefore, hesitate in giving his consent to the building of a house for the

¹⁴Letter from Mr. Provencher, 5th Jan., 1819.

¹⁵From the same to Bishop Plessis; Pembina, 14th Feb., 1819.

missionary and a chapel for the faithful of that outpost.

While the Church was thus implanting herself on the banks of the Red River, the mission of Fort William, for which the Northwest Company is believed to have asked as early as 1814, was not neglected, though no permanent missionary establishment was made in the locality for quite a number of years. It had been entrusted to Rev. Mr. Tabeau, who, for reasons of an honourable character,¹⁶ had declined the foundation of that of Red River. From his post at Boucherville he periodically repaired for a time to Sault Ste. Marie and Fort William. In this mission he was granted an aid, August 13, 1818, in the person of Rev. Mr. Crevier, then assistant priest at Detroit, who was directed by Bishop Plessis to make there an apostolic excursion on behalf of the Indians and the French and English Canadians who frequented or dwelt in the two posts.

On March 11th of the following year (1819), Mr. Tabeau received another letter from his bishop, wherein he was consulted concerning the terms he considered proper to offer to prospective servants for the Red River mission. It appears that those hired on the spot by Mr. Provencher were lacking in honesty and morality. Through the intervention of Mr. Dionne, the good prelate had already secured "five nice boys, all of Kamouraska." He added

¹⁶The author of the *Panthéon Canadien*, Art. Tabeau, asserts that he died Bishop-elect of Spiga, 18th Dec., 1834.

that he counted on the parish priest of Boucherville for the continuation of the Fort William mission commenced the preceding year, as well as on his collaborator, Mr. Crevier. At the same time he admitted that he had vainly attempted to ascertain how the enterprise was viewed by the directors of the Northwest Company. After they had suggested it themselves, it was feared that the Red River foundation, which had been made under the auspices of their opponents in the trade, had considerably dampened their ardour for that of Fort William.

Left alone at the Forks, as the environs of Fort Douglas were still called, Mr. Provencher, in prevision of the forthcoming winter, exerted himself in hurrying the building of his humble lodgings. He stooped to the most menial tasks in the assistance he lent his workmen. That part of his house which was to be used as a temporary chapel was finished for All Saints' Day, 1818, when he held the first service in it.¹⁷ This he put under the patronage of St. Boniface, in order to draw God's blessings on the German Meurons, Catholics none too fervent, through the intercession of the Apostle of their nation.¹⁸ By extension the name was soon applied to the little Catholic settlement on the banks of the Seine.

¹⁷It is on record that the day Provencher opened his first chapel on the Red River, three children, Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière, Reine Lagimodière and Josette Houle, made their first communion, while a Meuron soldier named Rodger was married to Marguerite Lagimodière.

¹⁸Letter from Provencher to Bishop Plessis; Pembina, 14th Feb., 1819.

January 15, 1819, is the very first time that we see that place thus denominated in Provencher's correspondence. He had just gone to pay a visit to his confrère at Pembina. He then mentions that, apart from his own combination of a house and chapel, which was still unfinished, he had prepared the material, oak logs with outside sawed off, for a regular church eighty feet long, which he intended to erect at St. Boniface.

He adds: "We are always on good terms with both companies. The Nor'westers are ever ready to render us all the services in their power." Then comes the significant statement that "the Hudson's Bay Company people are not so obliging."¹⁹ He ends with a subject which is as near his heart as it is in the case of Mr. Dumoulin. "Already," he says, "if we had sisters for the education of the girls, they would find something to do here. . . . I do not believe it inopportune to think of this."

During the following March Mr. Provencher undertook a much more important journey than that to Pembina. He went by dog-train to visit the trading posts at Qu'Appelle River, some three hundred miles from St. Boniface, and on the Souris River. There he had the consolation of baptizing forty children of Canadians and of hearing the confessions of all the Catholic servants, who were quite numerous at both places.

On his return, he sent his confrère to give a mis-

¹⁹Pembina, 15th Jan., 1819.

sion at Rainy Lake, where the employees of the northern traders repaired every year. These were the first in a series of apostolic excursions whereby the two missionaries gradually took possession of the country in the name of Christ. In the course of these the main posts existing at the time received their visit, and in the spring of 1820 Mr. Dumoulin went as far as Hudson Bay.

Reverting to the headquarters of the mission itself, we obtain through one of the vicar-general's letters a glimpse of the extreme penury that characterized his home. His heart had indeed been gladdened by the arrival of a 100-pound bell sent him from London by the Earl of Selkirk.²⁰ But, not only was there not a crumb of bread on his table months in and months out, but he had scarcely any flour for making hosts for the Holy Sacrifice, and his provision of wine for the same was getting low.

Apart from the hardships of a material order to which he had to submit, difficulties arising from the apathy of demoralized Indians and the obduracy of some Canadians and not a few Germans accustomed to the grossest licentiousness were great trials for the missionaries. At St. Boniface proper, another source of anxiety, demanding a still greater watchfulness on the part of the pastor, arose from the coming of Rev. John West, an Anglican clergyman sent out from England to minister to the spiritual needs of the Presbyterians of the settlement (Octo-

²⁰Provencher to Plessis, 24th Nov., 1819.

ber 4, 1820). For some time these people did not appreciate his services, owing to differences in faith and especially in liturgy from what they had been accustomed to in Scotland. Unable to do much with them, he turned his attention to Provencher's people. In a little book wherein he relates his doings during the three years that he stayed in the colony, Mr. West mentions the case of a Canadian²¹ whom he married to a Swiss Protestant woman.²²

This question of mixed marriages was for some time a thorn in the side of the missionaries. Owing to the great ignorance of the people and the ease with which matrimonial unions had been contracted prior to their arrival, it called for special vigilance. In the above mentioned case Mr. Provencher deemed it his duty to admonish the guilty party of the gravity of his transgression. Hence a sanctimonious horror on the part of the minister, who writes in his journal: "These circumstances prove that Popery, as it now exists, at least in this quarter of the globe, is not contrary to what it was in the days of the Reformation."²³ Some there are who will doubtless add that it is not likely to change to please heterodox preachers even unto the consummation of the world.

West was anything but a High Church clergyman. He revered "our blessed reformers," and seems to

²¹At that time, and long after, that expression meant a French-Canadian.

²²"The Substance of a Journal during a Residence at the Red River Colony," p. 74. London, 1824. Several Catholic Meurons were likewise married outside the Church.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 76.

have considered that, once a person of any or no faith had accepted a copy of his Bible, though that person may have been unable to read or understand it, he had a passport which would infallibly open to him the gates of heaven. His chief aim was therefore to make proselytes by that means, but he had finally to desist in the face of the ridicule he drew on himself by coaxing into accepting his Bibles half-breeds who did not know them from a cook book.²⁴ Even at Red River it was felt that the age of fetishes was gone.

Despite the depreciatory remarks of that minister concerning the lack of influence of the Catholic clergy, it was soon noticed that peace and order were beginning to reign where chaos and the fiercest passions had previously held sway. "The Protestants of this place are extremely pleased with our mission," wrote Mr. Dumoulin to Mgr. Plessis. "They seem to take the keenest interest in it, especially

²⁴On p. 79 of West's Journal the author claims that, on a certain day of February, 1822, some Swiss emigrants "attended divine service on the Sabbath during [his stay at Pembina] and expressed much gratitude for [his] reading to them the French Testament and the ministerial duties [he] performed among them." Mr. West must have had very special aptitudes for the acquisition of languages, or the thanks of the Swiss must have been prompted more by a sense of recognition of his good-will than by their satisfaction at the success of his performance. For, about a year before, that gentleman had asked Mr. Destroismaisons to teach him French in return for English lessons, and the latter had been dissuaded from acceding to his request (Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, 6th Jan., 1821). Would it be impossible to see in this refusal one of the reasons for that bitterness against the Catholic priests of Red River which pervades the minister's Journal?

It appears from a letter in Provencher's handwriting, of the 29th Nov., 1822, that, at that date, Mr. West "had no chapel as yet, but only a school house, with a teacher and a dozen pupils."

Col. Dickson. He professes to be delighted with our labours and writes often to England about them. On Christmas Day I admitted his daughter to her first communion, as well as Miss Powell, whose father is a Protestant.²²⁵

This salutary influence of the priests on behalf of peace in places where, but a short time before, it was so little known, is further emphasized by the continued contests ending in disorders and deeds of violence that were just then stirring to the utmost the representatives of both companies in far-off Athabasca, where the hand of religion could not reach.

On May 25, 1821, as many as 313 baptisms, 53 marriages and 31 funerals were to the credit of the mission at Pembina, while the school was prosperous under the direction of a Mr. Sauvé, another unordained ecclesiastic who had even six scholars studying latin grammar.

Meantime, the vicar-general had found it incumbent on himself to proceed to Quebec, in order to report on the progress of his mission, and also that he might avert a measure of the greatest import to himself and the Red River Settlement. Unwilling to leave Mr. Dumoulin alone in that far-off land, he had previously secured the services of a new missionary. This was Rev. Mr. Destroismaisons who, ordained October 17, 1819, arrived at Red River accompanied by Mr. Sauvé. What the nature of the above mentioned measure was we shall presently see.

²²⁵January 6th, 1821.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIRST BISHOP OF THE WEST.

1821-1829.

In founding the Church of St. Boniface, the ecclesiastical authorities were not without foreseeing that, owing to the immense distance intervening between Red River and Quebec, it could not long exist without having a bishop at its head. In fact, it would seem as if this natural evolution of all similar establishments had been hinted at in presence of Mr. Provencher. Less than two months after his arrival at the "Forks," we find him mentioning the subject in a letter to Bishop Plessis. "This country is still very young to have a bishop," he remarks. . . . "There is one thing which it would perhaps be good to take into consideration, it is that the choice of the first pastor might more appropriately fall on another man than on myself. You will easily find in your diocese a priest more able to fill that high post than I am. I am already pretty high."

Mr. Provencher fully realized the necessity of an ecclesiastic with episcopal powers to direct his mission; but he hoped somebody else would be found to shoulder the burden. To be a bishop at Red River meant to stay there for life; but the very thought of

¹Fort Douglas, 15th Aug., 1818.

this was enough to make anyone shudder. Could he be so self-sacrificing as to resign himself to such a fate? Moreover, are not the words bishop and superior intellect practically synonymous? But he was conscious of his deficiencies in that respect. Then he had his likes and dislikes: evidently he could not rule with that degree of impartiality which ensures prompt obedience.

Great, therefore, was his consternation when, after his arrival at Montreal, October 17, 1820, he learned that bulls had been obtained for him, dated February 1st of that same year, which named him titular Bishop of Juliopolis and coadjutor to the Bishop of Quebec for the Northwest. When these were handed him, he would not even read them, but immediately gave them back to Bishop Plessis, begging for time to ponder over the possible consequences of such an appointment, and claiming the liberty of declining the same. Mgr. Plessis thought it best not to press the matter just then, and as the poor missionary stood in need of almost everything,² he temporarily gave him charge of the parish of Yamachiche.

There Provencher meditated at leisure on the awful dilemma that confronted him. He was averse to preventing in any way the progress of the Red River mission, and yet everything in his make-up seemed

²He wrote in this connection: "When I reached Montreal my means were exhausted: I had neither money nor suitable clothes in which to appear in public. I was obliged to borrow a few dollars to buy myself a cassock, boots and a hat. While awaiting these articles, I had to shut myself up, so wretched were those they were intended to replace."

to militate against accepting the proffered dignity. His humility veiled from his mental vision that honesty of purpose, those undoubted ecclesiastical virtues, that burning zeal for the glory of God and the conversion of souls which easily take the place of more brilliant, but less useful, qualities, and in which he was certainly not deficient.

"I have not become a priest in order to amass money," he wrote to his bishop; "if needs be, I shall go to devote my youth to the welfare of Red River, but as a simple priest; speak, I shall obey you. As for the episcopate, it is another thing; never could I persuade myself that I was born for such a high rank. Rome has spoken: I am full of respect for the Chair of Peter; but its voice is merely an echo of your own word. The Holy Father does not know me, and I am sure that if he did he would not admit me."²

Mr. Provencher wrote the same day to a personal friend, who was to be consecrated five days later Bishop of Telmesse and coadjutor of Quebec for Montreal. He begged for a frank opinion on the line of conduct he should follow. "Monseigneur [of Quebec] should know me enough not to think of me," he said. "At all events, I am firmly determined to defend myself as well as I can."

Mgr. Lartigue (his correspondent) advised him to yield. Consequently, Provencher notified his Ordinary of his consent, March 19, 1821. He remained

²Jan. 16th, 1821.

another year at Yamachiche in order to create resources for his poor mission, and seek for recruits among the seminaries and colleges. Only one did he find. He was a cleric, as yet in minor orders, the Rev. Jean Harper, a French Canadian with an English name, who consented to follow him.

On May 12th, Provencher was consecrated by Bishop Plessis, and appointed coadjutor for the Northwest, as the civil authorities still objected to the creation of a regular hierarchy with metropolitans and suffragans in Canada. On the first of June of the same year, 1822, he was off again for his distant mission, with Mr. Harper as a companion. This return trip was in a sense a disappointment to him. At the last moment, the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company advised him that they could not grant him the free passage in their boat on which he had counted. Therefore he had to outfit a canoe at his own expense, and thus were eaten up the savings he had made at Yamachiche and elsewhere.

Many were the children he regenerated in the waters of baptism and the sinners he reconciled with their Maker on his way home. On the 7th of August he reached St. Boniface, where he was received with great demonstrations of joy.

He had been there only one day when he had to give his attention to a matter which for a time threatened to develop into a source of great annoyance to himself and people. We have seen that Pembina was the supply post of the colony, owing to its



BISHOP PROVANCHER,
The Apostle of Central Canada.



proximity to the buffalo, while St. Boniface and its environs had been three times afflicted with a visitation of locusts, which had destroyed all the crops and grass. These circumstances easily accounted for the larger population at the former place.

But it had been discovered that Pembina was just outside of the British possessions in North America, and the executor of Lord Selkirk (who had died at Pau, France, April 8, 1820), had been shocked at the virtual neglect of "the Forks" by the Canadians, in a trip he had just taken there. That gentleman, a Mr. John Halkett, was a brother-in-law to the deceased earl, but he did not in the least share in his sympathy with Catholics. He had just left for Norway House and England after winding up the affairs of the estate in the colony, but not before he had written for Bishop Provencher a letter couched in offensive language, whereby the new prelate was summoned to call on his people to abandon the American post and settle near Fort Douglas.

The reasons he gave for that move were plausible enough, but its execution was not so easy as he imagined. Therefore the bishop firmly declared in a letter he addressed him three days after his return that "this emigration is absolutely impossible this year, because nobody will be in a hurry to come to the Forks with the prospect of certain starvation." He then goes on to state that "far from the Forks being in a position to support the proposed newcomers from Pembina, part of the people at the

Forks will have to go this winter to Pembina in search of something to live on." He added that the earliest that a step such as that contemplated by Mr. Halkett could be taken would be the ensuing spring.

This missive Halkett received at York Factory. On August 30th he wrote to Provencher, almost in the same peremptory tone, and to the prelate's request that he be allowed to establish a settlement on Lake Manitoba, where such of the Canadians and halfbreeds as did not take kindly to farming could get a living by fishing, the inexorable Scotchman answered by a refusal. As an outcome of this correspondence, Bishop Provencher went himself to pass a few days at Pembina (January, 1823), with a view to preparing the people for the measure he was forced to take. He told them that he saw himself in the necessity of recalling Mr. Dumoulin, and invited them to come down to St. Boniface or its neighbourhood.

A few followed his advice; others went up the Assiniboine to what was then called the White Horse Plains, about fifteen miles from the Forks, and founded the settlement which was to become the parish of St. François-Xavier. Others again looked elsewhere for salvation. Thirty-five Canadians, finding themselves abandoned at the bidding of the proprietors of the colony, signed a petition to the American Government, requesting to be taken under the protection of the United States.

This last step occasioned complaints on the part of some Hudson's Bay Company officers, who would fain have held Bishop Provencher responsible therefor, though, as a matter of fact, all his energies had been bent in an opposite direction. The rumours having come to the knowledge of his superior at Quebec, the latter who, by previous communications, knew of Halkett's animus against the Catholic missionaries, feared lest that gentleman might endanger the future of their establishment at Red River.

He therefore asked that if, in spite of the missionaries' irreprehensible conduct, complaints were made in London against them, no opinion be formed before the accused had had an opportunity of clearing themselves of the charges.⁴ Halkett answered that no such complaints had reached London, though the Company's Committee had been advised that the petition to the American authorities must have been drawn and circulated with the concurrence of the Roman Catholic priests. But he added immediately that "this appears to be extremely improbable."

As far as the mission's personnel was concerned, the abandonment of Pembina had an unfortunate

⁴Jan. 19th, 1824.

⁵London, 14th April, 1824. On June 12 of the following year, Provencher, who had just become aware of his delicate situation, wrote to Bishop Plessis: "It is quite true that when Major Long passed at Pembina the people of the place entrusted him with a petition for the American Congress; but it is perfectly false to assert that it was made at our instigation, since none of us was on the spot. There had been no question of it, and we had learnt of it only a long time after the passage of the major. I do not know the wording of that petition, which has been little spoken of here."

result. Rev. Dumoulin, good missionary as he undoubtedly was, had already allowed visions of friends, home and parents gradually to draw his heart from the theatre of his labours. He took his removal from his flock as an excuse for asking leave to return to Lower Canada.

This was but the starting point in a long series of similar withdrawals, the source of unending trials for the head of the mission, because of worry and anxiety concerning the means of recruiting and keeping his clergy. He had scarcely time to rejoice in the arrival of a new worker in the Lord's vineyard, when another who had been under him but a few years would throw longing glances in the direction of the east.

Mr. Dumoulin left on July 16, 1823, after exactly five years of good services. Just one priest remained, Rev. Destroismaisons, and Dumoulin had scarcely been away when the younger priest commenced to think of his own return.^o

And yet good men in the missionary field were then sadly wanted. Apart from the Indians, for the benefit of whom nothing serious had so far been attempted, the number of Catholics, by outside accessions, natural increase or conversions of Protestants, was getting every day larger. As early as August, 1821, the Catholics in the valley of the Red River were 800, of whom 350 lived at St. Boniface,

^o "Mr. Destroismaisons would gladly see Canada again" (Provencher to Plessis, 16th July, 1823).

with forty-six catechumens, and 450 at Pembina, with fifty catechumens. Early in the following year Swiss emigrants arrived, among whom were seven Catholics.⁷ But by the amalgamation of the two companies in 1821 numerous posts, which had been erected merely for the sake of competition, were abandoned, and the services of their Canadian servants dispensed with. These having heard of the mission on the banks of the Red, flocked thither with their families and considerably swelled the ranks of the Catholics.

On the other hand, abjurations of Protestantism, while not common, did at times occur. In August, 1822, the conversion of a Scotch lady is chronicled, and, two years later, Provencher is pleased to announce that of several Swiss women married to Catholics, adding that some more were expected to take place in the near future. Then there were the children of other Swiss who, not understanding English, were sure to fall within the pale of the Catholic Church.⁸

Though he had severed his connection with the Red River mission, Mr. Dumoulin ever kept a warm corner in his heart for it, and he furthered its interests to the best of his abilities. He published in the course of 1824 a statement destined primarily to vindicate the creation of a bishopric there, which many attacked as useless, or at least premature. He

⁷Letter from Mr. Destroismaisons to Bishop Plessis, 30th Aug., 1821.

⁸Provencher to Plessis, 15th July, 1824.

takes occasion of that publication to remark that, when he left Red River, baptism had already been administered to 800 persons, 120 marriages had been celebrated or regularized, and 150 first communions had gladdened the hearts of the missionaries. He adds that there were already more Catholics within that territory than there had been in the district of Boston when that was raised to the rank of a diocese. Dumoulin also extols the virtues of the Bishop of Juliopolis, and ends by soliciting subscriptions to assist him in his good work, heading the list himself with a gift of fifteen pounds.*

This and other donations were all the more welcome as the Red River mission stood greatly in need of the sinews of war. One of the main sources of expense was the schools maintained by the bishop and his missionaries. It can truthfully be said that the Catholic clergy concurred in regarding them as works of vital importance. When we consider the extremely unstable character of the population that formed their flocks, we may well wonder at their untiring efforts in this direction, especially as these were so little appreciated by the parents, Canadians or halfbreeds accustomed to a free and easy life on the plains, where the possession of literary accomplishments was of very little use.

Thus in 1821, Mr. Sauvé was asking for more primers, some grammars, *Epitomes*, and other little

**Notice sur les Missions de la Rivière Rouge*; St. Pierre, 10th March, 1824.

school books.¹⁰ A few months later, works on history and books of devotion were wanted.¹¹

Nor is this all. Even at that early date, the thoughts of the missionaries were for the future. They would fain get from their motley congregations recruits to fill up their ranks when they should have to relinquish their labours. With this end in view, they endeavoured to prepare halfbreed or Canadian boys for the priesthood. In 1822 we note that Provencher is solicitous concerning the acquisition of French-Latin and Latin-French dictionaries with a few classical volumes which he needs for his scholars.¹² Later on, June, 1824, he mentions two young men, fairly well endowed as far as intellectual gifts go, who had gone through Mr. Harper's primary school at St. Boniface and were just ready to start on a collegiate course. Even then he had two other boys in the Latin classics, whom he taught himself. They had already gone through the entire *Epitome*, *De Viris illustribus*, Cornelius Nepos, four books of Quintus Curtius, the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Imitation in Latin. "They begin to understand versification," he writes, "and are going to follow belles-lettres this summer."¹³ Then comes the significant ejaculation: "Please God that they do not slip out of my hands!" His wishes were not to be realized. Neither dur-

¹⁰Letter from Bishop Provencher, Yamachiche, 14th June.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 1st Oct., 1821.

¹²Yamachiche, 18th May, 1822.

¹³June 1st, 1824.

ing his lifetime nor during that of his immediate successor was there ever a halfbreed elevated to the priesthood in the whole Canadian West. But from the standpoint of higher education, these efforts of men with scarcely a sufficiency of the necessities of life to impart to halfbreed children a knowledge which would lift them above the average white man, are certainly worthy of record.

In view of the prosperous condition of the great institution which every Westerner knows to-day as St. Boniface College, it may be of some interest to mention the names of its two first scholars (1823), viz.: Sénécal, a French Canadian, and Chénier, the halfbreed son of a Lachine man settled at Pembina.

Year after year we see the good bishop struggling on with his embryo college, asking for books here, for funds there, and having periodically to admit his disappointments. The scholars were all that could be desired as far as mental abilities were concerned; but, arrived at a certain age, they must be off for the lack of an ecclesiastical vocation. In 1827 he resolves to take boarders if he can get provisions enough. He has already two, with a few more ready to come. A halfbreed named Bruneau¹⁴ should finish his studies within two years, he says; but, taught by experience, the prelate has his doubts concerning his vocation (June 22, 1827). The following year this young man was still with him, in the highest class

¹⁴This was François Bruneau, who became in later years a magistrate in Assiniboia, respected for his well-known integrity and other qualities.

of his collegiate course, and great hopes were built on him which were not destined to be realized.

Another question, which we have already mentioned, claimed the bishop's attention. This was the education of girls. In 1824 Mr. Harper, who was soon to be raised to the priesthood, taught the boys while putting the last touches to his own theological studies. Provencher had his Latin course with his four pupils; but the girls were of necessity neglected. At Pembina he had made the acquaintance of an old trader named Nolin, who had five halfbreed daughters, some of whom had been educated in Canada. One of them, Angélique, he thought would make a good nun, or at least an acceptable schoolmistress. In July, 1824, he wrote Nolin with a view to having his daughter at the head of a school for girls at St. Boniface; but the old man refused on the pretext that, being eighty-two years old, he needed her services. The bishop thought this rather unreasonable, as he had four other grown-up daughters. He suspected that the opposition to her departure was coming more from her sisters than from her father.

The following year he reiterated his instances, but to no purpose; the old gentleman seemed obdurate, though his daughter longed to consecrate herself to God. The bishop had to wait until 1829 to put his plan into execution. Angélique Nolin then came, accompanied by one of her sisters. Without attempting to enter into the religious state, for which she had no real vocation, she opened at St. Boniface the

first school for girls ever organized within what is now Manitoba, as Provencher himself had started the first school for boys within the same territory.

So far the bishop who had practically under him a district almost vast as Europe had but one priest, Mr. Destroismaisons. On the 1st of November, 1824, he raised to the priesthood Rev. John Harper, whom we have seen lending his valued assistance at St. Boniface. Mr. Destroismaisons was a kind gentleman, but endowed with little oratorical ability. With the aid of an interpreter, he occasionally gave short missions to the natives who frequented in the summer the mouth of Pembina River. The results were not brilliant; yet the good priest had the consolation of being listened to and of explaining the principal mysteries of our faith, teaching at the same time a few simple hymns to the natives.

He returned to Canada in the course of 1827, and his place was taken by a cleric named François Bouchér who had as yet received only the ecclesiastical tonsure.

Just then, in spite of the veto of Mr. Halkett, a new settlement was being formed on the shores of Lake Manitoba by Canadians and halfbreeds hailing from St. Boniface. After three years (1822-25) free from the plague of locusts, it had pleased Divine Providence to afflict the mission and settlement at "The Forks" with another scourge. This took the shape of an inundation which affected the whole central valley of North America in the spring of

1826.¹⁵ The winter had been very severe and the snow deeper than usual, so that a thaw which came later than in previous years, when the days were longer, raised the waters of the Red River to a prodigious extent. They went up forty feet above any remembered high water mark, overflowing their banks and destroying everything. On the east side of the stream, the bishop's house was the only habitation left standing.

Hence the emigration of many colonists, mostly Swiss, to the United States, while others directed their steps towards Lake Manitoba. Fortunately about 150 persons came down to the Red River in that very year, long after remembered as that of "The Flood." These were old voyageurs with their families from the north, who partially filled the vacant places at St. Boniface.

The Catholic population was therefore becoming more and more homogeneous. Both Macdonells had left the country, regretted by all for their uprightness and thorough attachment to the faith of their fathers. Another English-speaking friend of the priests, Mr. John McDonald, was just threatening to bid farewell to the Middle West. John McDonald, surnamed *Le Borgne* (or One-Eyed) to distinguish him from other gentlemen of the same name in the west, had been a proprietor of the Northwest Com-

¹⁵In April of that year the Missouri rose so rapidly that the inhabitants of fifteen tents of Dakota Indians were drowned, and a French-Canadian, Toussaint Charbonneau, had to take refuge on a floating shed, remaining three days without fire.

pany. On August 16, 1817, we find him at Fort William, and on October 22, 1818, he was indicted, in common with many others, as an accessory after the fact for the murder of Robert Semple, in the trial that took place at Toronto and resulted in the acquittal of the accused.¹⁶ And now, February 2, 1826, Bishop Provencher regrets to record his serious illness on the lower Winnipeg River.

Rev. Destroismaisons had spent the Christmas season of that same year among the new settlers of Lake Manitoba, being the first priest who exercised his ministry in that quarter. As to Pembina, despite Halkett's pronouncement, it counted then more inhabitants than at the time of Mr. Dumoulin.

On Pentecost Day, 1828, Mgr. Provencher confirmed as many as fifty-three persons, a fact that bespeaks a constantly increasing Catholic population. Mr. Harper was then of the greatest help to him, "always on the wing for the good of souls," as the prelate writes.¹⁷ In August of the preceding year, he had left for a sojourn of two months among the buffalo hunters; but he did not do much, owing to the excitement of the chase and the many occupations of the halfbreeds consequent thereon. He passed the following winter at the White Horse Plains (St. François-Xavier), teaching and preaching the word of God, and in June of 1828 he left for York Factory, where he gave a mission.

¹⁶Though not otherwise implicated, John Macdonell, *dit Le Prêtre*, was called to testify in the course of the same.

¹⁷June 18th, 1828.

As to the bishop himself, not only did he attend to the spiritual needs of the adults, but his biographer tells us of the untiring zeal with which he taught catechism to the children every day of his life.¹⁸

Yet these cares, inherent to the pastoral office, did not absorb all his time. Provencher was the father of his people: their material needs and welfare occupied a prominent place in his heart. In a new country, far away from the civilized world, and without any industry or even the more primitive avocation of the husbandman among his Canadians, halfbreeds and Indians, he felt that, if anything must be done to withdraw them from their roving habits and consequent vices, it was incumbent on him personally to do it, and thereby contribute towards the general good of the colony. He therefore taught them agriculture by word and example, going so far as to put his own hand to the plough, even after his elevation to the episcopate. As early as 1822, he had coaxed the Sautaux into sowing wheat in four different localities.¹⁹ He imported from Canada various kinds of fruit trees and experimented with them. Then, conscious of his failures, he tried with their seeds, with similar results.

After this he turned his attention to the question of industries. He was grieved to see the idleness of too many among his people, an idleness which was every way pernicious and destructive of their

¹⁸Geo. Dugas, *Monseigneur Provencher*, p. 137.

¹⁹St. Boniface, 16th August, 1822.

morals. With the intention of giving them some occupation at home, and at the same time to contribute to their material welfare, he caused weaving to be taught to the girls of the St. Boniface school. To this end he cultivated hemp, and asked for cards for combing wool.²⁰

This industrial activity made a healthful impression on the settlement. When a grist-mill was put up at public expense, and then sold out to a private party, one of the stipulations of the contract was that the Catholic mission should be the judge of the quantity of grain that was to be taken as payment for the grinding.²¹

Under those circumstances we cannot be surprised to see Bishop Provencher writing that he had received a letter from the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company in America, Mr. (afterwards Sir) George Simpson, wherein that gentleman states that he "shall be very pleased to inform the Committee in London of the important services which the mission renders in the country."²² Less than a month later, the annual council held at York Factory passed among its resolutions one that mentioned "the great benefit being experienced from the benevolent and indefatigable exertions of the Catholic mission at Red River on the welfare and moral and religious instruction of its numerous followers,

²⁰St. Boniface, 2nd Feb., 1826.

²¹St. Boniface, same date.

²²St. Boniface, 12th June, 1825.

and it being observed with much satisfaction that the influence of the mission under the direction of the Right Reverend Bishop of Juliopolis has been uniformly directed to the best interests of the Settlement and of the country at large.¹⁷²³

As a tangible recognition of this usefulness, the Company granted the mission a gratuity of £50 and an assortment of table goods, which the poor prelate received with unfeigned gratitude.

What amazes us after this is the silence the historians of Manitoba have almost uniformly maintained on the influence for good of the Catholic Church in the early days of that country. Alexander Ross, in particular, is so complete and fair that, not only does he ignore it entirely, but he does not as much as mention Bishop Provencher once in the 416 pages of his work!

¹⁷²³York Factory, 2nd July, 1825.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST INDIAN MISSIONS.

1830-1839.

In 1830 the Red River mission comprised three stations, namely, St. Boniface, Pembina and St. François-Xavier, or White Horse Plains, each of which had a modest little church or chapel.¹ However, the only one which could really pretend to the title of church was the oak building put up by Mgr. Provencher in 1820.² In spite of the fact that this had never been quite finished, and that it had seriously suffered during the flood of 1826, it still served as a cathedral.

But it seemed that the time had come to erect an edifice more worthy of its name. In 1829 Governor Simpson, who held Provencher in high esteem, volunteered to subscribe £100 towards the erection of a stone cathedral.³ Experience was showing that stone buildings were by no means impossible of realization at Red River, since the Bishop of Juliopolis was just then (1829-30) replacing by a house of that

¹A retired clerk also taught school at St. François-Xavier.

²Rev. G. Dugas states in his *Monseigneur Provencher*, p. 121, that this could not be made proof against snow and rain before 1825. We fail to see how this could be the case, considering that Mr. Dumoulin, who left in 1823, expressly says that "Divine Office was [then] solemnly performed in the new church of St. Boniface" (*Notice sur la Rivière Rouge*).

³Provencher to the Bishop of Québec, 6th June, 1830.

description that which he had so far used as his "palace." The stone was picked up along the shores of the Red, and conveyed to St. Boniface in flat boats.

This offer of the governor made an impression on the good bishop. He resolved to pass into Canada and seek additional funds, as well as recruits for his clergy. He therefore left in August, 1830, and spent over a year soliciting alms in Lower Canada. These were not grudged the apostolic man. In 1832 he returned west, reaching St. Boniface on July 17th; but the lack of stone masons compelled him to postpone the beginning of his enterprise, as the only one then in the colony had already pledged his services to the Hudson's Bay Company.

The foundations of the new temple were laid in June, 1833, and five stone masons at work on the building made such satisfactory progress that, in July of the following year, the bishop complained of his inability to supply them fast enough with stone. The church was 100 feet long by 45 in width, and, when completed, it became the pride of the settlement, being immortalized by the poet Whittier as the edifice with the "turrets twain." It was not finished until 1837, and, in July of that year, some little masonry work remained to be done on the porch.*

In giving an account of the progress of that work

"My church is covered with boards and is being covered with shingles. There is still a little masonry work to finish on the doorway. All that which is completed seems solid" (Provencher to Bishop Signay, of Quebec, 4th July, 1837).

Provencher mentions his new stone house as imperceptibly crumbling to ruins and a source of great annoyance on rainy days. As lime was not known at Red River when it was built, the bishop had thought a kind of white clay, common in places along the stream, a good substitute. He now saw his mistake. At the same time he realized that, after the great expenditures consequent on the erection of his cathedral, he could not think of building another house for some time to come.

Funds for these works were not the only results of his journey to Canada. He had brought therefrom a subject who, first of all his priests, was to give his undivided attention to the evangelization of the numerous Indian tribes scattered over Provencher's realm.

The reader has not forgotten that the first point in the instructions given the missionaries to Red River by the great Bishop Plessis was the preaching of the Gospel to the natives, and the compiling of grammars and dictionaries of their languages. But it need not be explained that, with the altogether insufficient number of clergy at his command, all that Provencher could do was to provide for the religious wants of Catholics, Canadian, halfbreed and others. Nevertheless, feeble and intermittent efforts had been made with a view to following, to a small extent, the directions of the Bishop of Quebec.

From a human standpoint, the work had not been pleasant nor the results encouraging. Mr. Dumou-

lin, especially, had not carried home the best of recollections of the Red River Indians. In 1820 one of them fired at him while he was saying his breviary by the Pembina River, the bullet passing through his hat. G. Dugas would have it that the object of the redskin was to ascertain whether the priest was vulnerable or not.³ If this was really the case, we must presume that the Indian's first trial did not quite satisfy him on that score, since in the following spring the same individual renewed his experiment (?) with the same result.⁴ But this time some of Dumoulin's parishioners were at hand. They captured the Indian and tied him up. "Many wanted to kill him," writes the missionary; "fortunately he succeeded in effecting his escape."

Apart from the lack of the proper men to undertake it, the conversion of the Red River Indians was an exceedingly thankless task. As Mr. Dumoulin wrote, the chief obstacle "was the wretched custom established in the country of intoxicating the natives when anything was wanted of them. The colony did it with no more scruples than the Company. In the conventions made with the Indians for the purpose of extinguishing their title to the land, one of the chief clauses was that the colony should yearly furnish them with a stipulated amount of rum; so that they had much more than was necessary for them to get drunk." The missionary then mentions that,

³*Monseigneur Provencher*, pp. 314-15.

⁴Dumoulin to Plessis; Pembina, 25th May, 1821.

⁵The same to the same; *ibid.*, 5th January, 1819.

in the autumn of 1818, an Indian woman had been killed in one of the orgies prompted by an abundance of liquor, adding that such outrages were by no means infrequent.

With time matters scarcely improved. It is therefore cause for little wonder if the Rev. Mr. Belcourt seems to have had misgivings when the Bishop of Quebec ordered him to Red River. He was then parish priest of Ste. Martine, in Lower Canada. The dread with which all the Canadian secular priests looked upon the Red River country would in itself suffice to explain the following lines of Belcourt to his Ordinary:

"I frankly confess that I regard with surprise and dread the explicit order you give me to put myself in readiness to proceed to Red River, at a time when all my fears had vanished. What astonishes me is to see how little Your Lordship knows me. The people who have so favourably spoken of me attribute to me qualities I do not possess. I have received from God but very common gifts, and he who will take my place at Ste. Martine might do just as well as I at Red-River."

These were certainly words dictated either by an excess of modesty, or by a desire to ward off the proffered mission. Then comes the heart-breaking of a man in whom the yearnings of nature are not entirely dead:

"I have a father and a mother who are inconsolable, after they have exhausted their means in secur-

ing my education. My father, I know, will not survive my departure. I think that my conscience, at one with the dictates of nature, imperiously tells me that it is not any more allowed to be ungrateful towards one's parents than in the case of strangers who might have rendered one the same services; hence my observations. Your Lordship has procured [ecclesiastical] education to subjects who would not have all these obstacles to overcome, and there are some French who would not be more expatriated in Red River than they are in Canada. . . . I shall again tell Your Lordship that if my representations do not avail; if I am useless or hurtful in this diocese; if Providence designed me to be born here in order that I might have another fatherland, then with trembling I obey."⁸

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rev. Mr. Belcourt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

REV. MR. BELCOURT'S SIGNATURE.

In spite of these protestations of nature, Mr. Belcourt made his sacrifice, little knowing that, in his own particular case, few consolations and endless mortifications of a kind that is not common awaited him in the west. Gold is none the less gold even though accidentally disfigured by dross, and absolute freedom from human imperfections is not to be

February 9th, 1831.

found in this world. Writing history, not a panegyric, we may as well state at the outset that Bishop Provencher never granted his full sympathies to the new missionary, who, zealous and brilliant, if somewhat fickle and self-willed, would have done more good if in full union of ideals with his immediate superior.

Rev. Georges Antoine Belcourt⁹ is the only Catholic priest whom Alexander Ross deigns to mention by name in his "Red River Settlement." He calls him "a man of active habits, intelligence and enterprise," adding that, "paradoxical as the statement may appear, Mr. Belcourt understood the language of the savages better than the savages understand it themselves. With characteristic ingenuity and perseverance, he so far availed himself of the peculiar character of the Chippeway tongue, as to enrich it with compounds, which faithfully and vividly expressed, as far as possible, the foreign ideas of civilization and Christianity. In this respect, Mr. Belcourt has an incalculable advantage over his Protestant rivals, who, generally speaking, rely implicitly on native interpreters of very inadequate qualifications."¹⁰

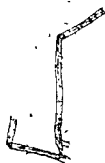
After having studied the Sauteux, or Chippeway

⁹Born 22nd April, 1803, at Baie-du-Febvre, Lower Canada, Georges Antoine Belcourt was the son of Antoine B. and of Josephte Lemire. He made his studies in the college of Nicolet, and was ordained priest 19th March, 1827. At first parish priest of St. François-du-Lac, he was in 1830 transferred to Ste. Martine.

¹⁰*Op. cit.*, pp. 285, 286.



REV. MR. BELCOURT.



language, Mr. Belcourt established (1833) on the Assiniboine, about thirty miles from its mouth, an Indian village, for which Mr. George Simpson, the Governor-in-Chief of the Hudson's Bay Company in America, granted a very valuable tract of land fully five miles in length.¹¹ Thereon were built in time a church, with houses of humble proportions surrounded by diminutive fields. The whole was the result of his own exertions much more than of his neophytes' efforts. To succeed in his enterprise he spared neither fatigue, manual labour nor expense.

He was still in the experimental stages when his catechumens were dispersed by a band of Gros-Ventre Indians who fell upon them unawares. A house barely twenty feet square had just been put up, which was intended as a chapel for the people and lodging quarters for the missionary. It was at that time the only building of the kind within sixty miles of the episcopal mansion. When assailed by the American Indians,¹² Belcourt was living under a shelter of skins and bark. He hurriedly left his hovel, and took refuge in the log house where he assembled the few remaining Sautaux.

These were times of surprises and massacres. The natives from the south, especially the Sioux, took pleasure in sallying out against the Canadian aborigines, not even sparing the Canadians and the half-breeds whenever they found them at a disadvantage.

¹¹*Ibid.*, *ibid.*

¹²The Gros-Ventres of the French were the Hidatsa, a Sioux tribe.

In the present case, it seems that the strange Indians were merely marauders, or spies bent on reconnoitring for a larger party. It was in September, 1833, and all the male population was away hunting buffalo, with the exception of two pagans, who had not even arrows with them, and two Christians who were to help the missionary in sawing boards for the chapel. From their narrow quarters the two Christians fired off shot after shot, while the others made such a noise that the southern braves thought it prudent to retire.

Yet for several days thereafter they annoyed Belcourt's people, lurking about in threatening attitudes and trying to surprise them, probably for the sake of the scalps which they wished to obtain before they returned to their friends.¹³ This caused a slight change in the location of the embryo settlement. The place which was then chosen was originally called Fournier Prairie, and lay on the left bank of the Assiniboine. It is known to-day as St. Eustache; but Belcourt put it under the patronage of the Apostle of Nations, calling it St. Paul's Mission, or Baie Saint-Paul.

In June, 1835, the missionary reported that about thirty families of Indians had sown, and he exulted in the fact that Bishop Provencher had sent him oxen. Belcourt was generally optimistic; in this particular case he counted many families for whom his own servant had done practically all the work.

¹³Letter from Mr. Belcourt, St. Paul's Mission, 11th July, 1834.

Potatoes, maize and barley alone were the object of these labours.

Not long before, a new recruit had come to the assistance of the Red River missionaries. This was Rev. Charles Edouard Poiré, who was ordained at St. Boniface in 1833 and entrusted with the care of the mission at White Horse Plains. At the expiration of four years he asked to return east, claiming that he had come with the understanding that he should remain only that period of time.¹⁴ Mgr. Provencher had eventually to let him go in 1838.

Belcourt was more persevering, and it is worth noticing that, in spite of the pangs he felt in leaving Canada, he soon experienced, and ever retained, a real attraction for the West. When momentarily absent therefrom, he pined away until he was restored to his distant wilderness. He was a man of plans, always for the good of his flock, but not as often in strict accordance with the dictates of a more experienced mind. We cannot conceal the fact that he generally seems to have considered as essential to the success of his mission that which should have been regarded as a mere accessory. Grace will transform a depraved pagan into a model Christian, but it has nothing to do with racial characteristics. In the search after the kingdom of heaven it is immaterial whether you farm, fish or hunt. To demand that an inveterate nomad should be bound to

¹⁴Provencher to Mgr. of Sidyme, 30th April, 1837.

the soil before becoming a Christian is to go too far and reverse the proper order of things.

With his more mature judgment, Provencher would have preferred more catechizing and less ploughing in his representative on the banks of the Assiniboine. But the latter was sensitive; when remonstrated with, he easily imagined that his good intentions were ignored, and at times the thought of a speedy return east would hover around his mind.

At the very time that he was reporting to the Bishop of Quebec such farming activities by the Assiniboine, he wrote of Mgr. Provencher: "His Lordship has seconded much more than usual my plans for the advancement of my mission.¹⁵ Nevertheless I have occasionally received from him letters which made me eagerly wish to return to Canada.

. . . I cannot persuade myself that he has no antipathy for me. . . . If I do not shed my blood for the salvation of infidels, I shall have nevertheless shed many a tear. If it pleased Your Lordship to wipe them off by recalling me, I should kiss your hands with thanksgiving."¹⁶

The following year, while still at St. Paul's, Mr. Belcourt reported little progress and few consolations, though he seemed to foresee better times in the near future. Sautaux, whose habitat was near the Rocky Mountains, had come to enquire into the

¹⁵Under date 30th April, 1837, Bishop Provencher, writing to the Bishop of Quebec, remarks that, up to that date, upwards of £600 had been spent on that mission alone.

¹⁶June 25th, 1835.

truth of what they had heard, namely, that several members of that tribe were "praying" (had become Christians) in a Sautaux town, which was in process of formation by the waters of the Assiniboine, and that a priest who spoke their own language like themselves was uttering words of an admirable wisdom. They had set out on February 20th, but had not arrived at St. Paul's before the 2nd of June.¹⁷

That summer (1836), the missionary had the ineffable consolation of admitting for the first time to holy communion five of his neophytes who had been on trial for three years. They were the first-fruits of the Sautaux nation in the Middle West.

Mr. Belcourt was a popular man among all classes of people, and the influence his popularity gave him he turned to good account. Even when occasionally repairing to St. Boniface or any other centre of civilization, he sometimes did more lasting good than with his own fickle and more or less mercenary Indians. In the beginning of this chapter we have called the reader's attention to works of a nature hitherto unknown in the Red River Settlement, we mean stone buildings. The Catholic mission was not alone in attempting such structures. In 1832 the Hudson's Bay Company had commenced near the junction of the two rivers a fort of that material; an enclosure of stout walls 260 feet long, with bastions and loop-holes, which was finished in 1834. Within,

¹⁷Belcourt to the Bishop of Quebec, July 8th, 1836.

there were the usual buildings, stores, warehouses and various dwelling houses for the officers and the servants.

This was the now famous Fort Garry, so named after Nicholas Garry, a prominent member of the Hudson's Bay Company Committee in London, who had come west to organize the new commercial body that resulted from the amalgamation of the Northwest and the Hudson's Bay Companies.

Shortly before Christmas of 1834, a clerk named Thomas Simpson, who was to die miserably after having accomplished important explorations on the north coast of America, was paying off the employees of the Company. Tired of waiting for his dues, one of them known by the name of Antoine Larocque, boldly went into the clerk's office, and, in terms savouring of insolence, demanded what was coming to him. As an answer he received from Simpson, not money, but a blow with an iron poker which split his skull.

With blood streaming out of his head, Larocque dashed out of the house and showed himself to his fellow halfbreeds. After the first moments of stupefaction, these resolved upon exacting an adequate compensation from the perpetrator of the assault. From mouth to mouth the news flew like wildfire that Simpson had attempted to murder one of them.

"He must be delivered into our hands," cried out the halfbreeds. "He shall pay for his crime."

Things looked serious. The poor clerk did not

relish the idea of being sacrificed to the rage of the Métis. As well would it have been to cast him out into a pack of ravenous wolves. His superiors would not any more consent to his venturing out of the fort gates, which had been closed as a measure of precaution.

At about 6 P.M. the crowd of malcontents had increased to an alarming extent. Such was the excitement of the people that even the stone walls of the fort grew to look as a doubtful protection, unless recourse were had to the cannon pointed on them, an extreme measure which could not be thought of. In vain did Mr. Alexander Christie, the local governor, endeavour to reason with the leaders, sending out message after message to offer conditions of peace; the halfbreeds would not listen to any proposition which did not include the surrender of the hapless clerk. The governor himself went out with Messrs. Logan and Ross, in the hope of appeasing the angry crowd. Despite the humiliation it involved, even this step proved fruitless.

In sheer desperation the authorities of the colony bethought themselves of the Catholic mission across the Red.

"We must go over and ask the help of the priest," suggested someone.

And, acting on this advice, the governor-in-chief himself, George Simpson, with a few other gentlemen, proceeded to St. Boniface, where Mr. Belcourt happened to be.

The missionary addressed the halfbreeds, reminded them of his constant sympathy with them, spoke of the pardon of offences enjoined on all Christians, and, by those kind words based on faith more than on reason, which among Catholics have a hundred-fold value owing to the sacred character of the person that utters them, he succeeded in soothing the wounded feelings of the people. The Company had to grant a pecuniary compensation to the family of his victim, but Thomas Simpson was left unmolested.¹⁸

As Mr. Belcourt was thus exerting himself on behalf of peace among the halfbreeds, a young priest less brilliantly endowed but more pliant and constant in the tasks entrusted to him, was preparing himself for the long missionary career that he was to follow in the west. Rev. Jean-Baptiste Thibault was born at St. Joseph of Lévis, December 14, 1810, and had arrived at St. Boniface in the summer of 1833, where he had received the order of priesthood

¹⁸Mentioning this episode, Rev. G. Dugas states that the governor sent for Belcourt (*L'Ouest Canadien*, p. 68). There can be no doubt that he did himself go out to him. For when, over twelve years later, that missionary found himself at variance with that same gentleman, he wrote of him in a document which saw the light of publicity: "If his heart were as generous as with men in general, he would have remembered that day when he came, escorted by the leading men of the country, to seek me in my poor cottage, to quell the trouble of the time, and to facilitate those measures upon which he looked as necessary to the security of his own life" (Letter to A. K. Isbister; Quebec, 21st Dec., 1847. In "Correspondence Relative to the Inhabitants of the Red River Settlement," p. 100). Mr. Belcourt was under a false impression when he imagined that Governor Simpson had forgotten the great service he then rendered him. We shall see that when, after a serious falling out with him, he agreed to secure his return to Red River, he based his intercession precisely on the services he had rendered to the Settlement and himself.

on the 8th of September of the same year. While at the head of the six scholars who then formed St. Boniface College, he was studying the Indian languages, and in July, 1834, he had already made considerable progress in that line. Even at that early date Bishop Provencher saw in him "a subject precious for his missions."¹⁹

It is also at this time that the Bishop of Juliopolis received a petition from the Oregon settlers, begging for missionaries. As he had nobody to send them, he decided to seek help in the east. He therefore journeyed to Lower Canada, and even pushed on as far as Europe, leaving young Mr. Thibault to take his place at the head of his missions (1835-37).

In Canada he secured the services of two choice subjects, the Revs. F. N. Blanchet and M. Demers, both of whom were in course of time to be elevated to the episcopate on the Pacific coast. For the lack of room in the canoes of the Hudson's Bay Company, only one of them could accompany the Bishop of Juliopolis to Red River on his return trip in 1837. This was the gentle and pious Mr. Demers, who laboured over a year in the territory, waiting for his superior, Mr. Blanchet, for whom a passage was obtained from Lachine to St. Boniface in 1838.

With the latter came a young priest from Deschambault, Lower Canada, Rev. J. Arsène Mayrand, who was to remain seven years in the Red River mis-

¹⁹Provencher to Bishop J. Signay, of Quebec, 16th July, 1834.

sion, without being able to accomplish as much as he wished owing to his delicate health.

On the arrival of the newcomers, Bishop Provencher could boast more priests within his territory than he ever possessed before the assumption of the Indian missions by the Oblates. These were Messrs. Belcourt, Poiré, Thibault, Demers, Blanchet and Mayrand. By this list it will be seen that two others, Messrs. Harper and Boucher, had duly walked in the footsteps of all previous missionaries and returned to Canada. The former had left in 1832, the latter one year later. At the departure of the Oregon missionaries Provencher's clergy was reduced to four members, and one of them, Mr. Poiré, was to return east the following year.

When the bishop arrived back from Canada Mr. Belcourt was sent to Rainy Lake, with the object of studying local conditions preparatory to establishing a permanent mission there. He left in the spring of 1838, while Mr. Poiré was replacing him at St. Paul's, where Angélique Nolin taught school since 1834. The ice of the Red River was getting soft, and his horse went through. Fortunately some people who wondered at his pluck, or imprudence, and were expecting an accident, lent him their assistance, and he extricated himself without having suffered any other harm than an icy bath. The missionary remained some time at the fort on the lower Winnipeg River, where he performed several marriages and fulfilled the usual ministerial duties of a Catholic priest.

At Rainy Laké he found the Indians "little disposed to leave the bottle for the word of God," as Provencher remarks in his picturesque language.²⁰ But he did not despair, and we shall see him there again, sowing in ground that was too often of a stony nature.

It is also with this period (1838) that we must connect the foundation by Mr. Belcourt of a mission at the junction of the English and Winnipeg Rivers.²¹ Wabassimong—such was its native name—cost the missionary untold exertions, both physical and mental; but from a religious standpoint it never was a success, though Alexander Ross admits that it was at one time "a considerable establishment."²² It boasted a church under the patronage of Our Lady of Mercy, houses for the Indians and the customary small fields, with cattle supplied from St. Boniface—a repetition of Belcourt's original mistake: attempts at civilizing before establishing solid Christian foundations. For the lack of the latter, the edifice so painfully erected crumbled after less than ten years of labours.

In August of the same year, 1838, Belcourt who, in addition to his missionary and manual labours, had been steadily working on a dictionary and a grammar of the Chippeway, or Sautaux, language,

²⁰To the Bishop of Sidyme; Red River, 6th Aug., 1838.

²¹Strangely enough, in the first of three volumes comprising "The History of the Northwest," Alex. Begg attributes (p. 281) to Rev. Mr. Darveau the foundation of the Wabassimong Mission, though Darveau was not yet a priest at the time Mr. Belcourt established it.

²²"Red River Settlement," p. 288.

and preparing less important Indian works, left for Canada "full of plans for the impression" of the same.²³ In the course of the following year (1839) he published a Chippeway primer, catechism and book of devotion combined, as well as a 146-page pamphlet on the "Principles of the Santeux Idiom," in French. He had to defer the publication of his dictionary.²⁴

²³Provencher to Mgr. Signay, Bishop of Quebec, 6th Aug., 1838. In St. Boniface and environs there were in 1839 1,600 Catholics, and 700 at St. François-Xavier.

²⁴It remains to this day in manuscript in the archives of the archbishopric of St. Boniface.

CHAPTER X.

THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA.

1839-1843.

For the first score of years of its existence the Red River settlement had been under a one-man's government, as far as the civil administration was concerned. In 1832, owing to the great increase in the ranks of the colonists and halfbreeds, it was thought advisable to have a few headmen (chosen by the Hudson's Bay Company) share to some extent in the responsibility of the management of the public affairs. The settlement then received the name of Assiniboia, and over it was placed a council which met at irregular intervals.

At first the religious denominations established at Red River were not recognized in the formation of that body, whose meetings were held at Fort Garry, as was called the new post which had succeeded Fort Douglas, and was soon to boast imposing stone structures. On May 4, 1832, the members of that council, the first whose deliberations are on record,¹ were George Simpson, Governor of Rupert's Land, president; Donald McKenzie, Governor of Assini-

¹Rev. Geo. Dugas, and most historians of Manitoba, state that this arrangement was first elaborated in 1835, an assertion which is shown to be erroneous by the minutes of that council which are still extant.

boia, and Councillors James Sutherland, John Pritchard and Robert Logan.

The very fact that the highest representative of the Hudson's Bay Company in America was the president of that assembly is good evidence that it was not intended to be popular. Yet there is no denying that most of its decisions tended towards the general good. On the other hand, its numbers were increased as time went on, and, in the last years of its existence, it was fairly representative of the people. It formed a patriarchal government wherein the requirements of morality, justice and good citizenship were not any more forgotten than the claims of the powerful corporation to which it was due.

It was not till the 12th of February, 1835, that, in the second of its sessions of which the minutes are preserved; a member of the Catholic clergy was admitted to the deliberations of that council in the person of Mgr. Provencher. Even then he was there, along with four others, by special invitation, not in virtue of real membership therein, as G. Dugas would have it. At that time the population of the colony amounted to about 5,000.

Even after that date, and before the prelate's departure for Europe, we see the Anglican minister, Rev. David T. Jones, as an *ex officio* member of that body, but no Catholic representative, as such. It was only on June 16, 1837, that is, over five years after the inauguration of the new form of govern-

ment, that Bishop Provencher was sworn in and admitted, along with a Captain Marcus Cary, as an official councillor.

Considering the exceptional position of the prelate in the colony, this might appear a rather tardy recognition of his social standing and administrative abilities. But it is quite possible that, being a man of retiring dispositions, more at home in French than in English, he had so far preferred to keep aloof from the petty politics of the Settlement. That his services continued to be appreciated is shown by the grant of £100, with an allowance of what was still called luxuries at Red River, that is, tea, sugar and a few other table requisites, which was then voted his mission by the committee of the Hudson's Bay Company.²

At all events, his presence in the Council of Assiniboia, as well as that of other Catholic ecclesiastics of whom we shall have much to say later on, proved quite beneficial, and the rôle they played therein was certainly not a secondary one.

It could scarcely have been otherwise, if we consider the vast interests the bishop then possessed in the colony. To mention but the question of education, Provencher was already at the head of a regular school system, comprising school teachers of both sexes, one of whom was teaching English as early as the summer of 1834.³ Fully alive to the

²From 1825 to 1830 the Company yearly granted £50 in aid of his mission. After 1830 this sum was doubled.

³Provencher to Signay, 16th July, 1834.

necessity of bettering the material, as well as the moral, condition of his people, he had also, as already hinted, brought from Canada, in the course of 1838, two women destined to teach the art of weaving to the colonists. The Hudson's Bay Company gave them a salary, which they were to receive annually during the first three years, while the Catholic mission furnished them with board and lodging. An industrial school was opened for the purpose, which in a short time was progressing satisfactorily. But its premises and machinery became the prey of the flames on March 26, 1839.

Yet it needs scarcely be remarked that the best of the bishop's attention had still to be concentrated towards the preservation and propagation of the faith. The former was the *raison d'être* of his more or less permanent stations of St. Boniface, Pembina and St. François-Xavier, while it was a wish to further the extension of the kingdom of God that prompted the Indian missions of St. Paul's, Wabasing and Rainy Lake under Belcourt and others. The bishop followed with unremitting solicitude the struggles of these pioneers against heavy odds, and he was ever careful to remind his priests of their obligation not to neglect the spiritual welfare of the natives under the pretext that their temporal interests badly needed watching over.

Mr. Belcourt returned from Lower Canada in the course of 1839. In the beginning of July he was again at St. Paul's on the Assiniboine, whence he

conveyed in two lines tidings of the greatest importance for the history of the Indian missions. "Before I left the crew," he writes, "I baptized a Hare Indian whom I had instructed on the way, and who was in danger of death."⁴ The Hares are aborigines of the Arctic Circle. Mr. Belcourt must therefore be credited with having been the first priest to confer baptism on a representative of that great Déné family, of which we shall have so much to say further on.

In 1840 we find the same missionary, ever full of good-will, placing his capacities as a mechanic at the disposal of his bishop, who at times was disposed to look unfavourably on the too frequent display of the same. He turned one hundred and thirty oaken balusters for the sanctuary and side chapels of the cathedral, as well as a hundred and fifty candlesticks for use as adjuncts to Divine worship.

The mention of these occupations, while it contributes towards forming a true picture of ecclesiastical life at Red River seventy years ago, cannot but remind us at the same time of the great artisan commonly known as St. Paul the Apostle who, in spite of the sublime mission he held from Our Lord Himself, did not deem it derogatory to his sacred calling to work with his own hands.⁵

In the autumn of the same year, Belcourt chron-

⁴To the Bishop of Quebec, 7th July, 1839.

⁵Acts xvii. 3; *ibid.*, xx. 34; 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8.

icles other events which shift the scene from the banks of the Assiniboine to the great plains of Central North America. He mentions as many as 1,700 carts used that year in the buffalo hunts, of which 200 returned empty. But, worse than all, on August 1st, nineteen persons had been struck, and four instantly killed, by lightning.

Reverting to the Indians, the same missionary fell in with a chief who gave him in a speech one of the reasons that militated against their conversion. As this throws a strong light on the mental make-up of the natives and illustrates one of the obstacles the missionaries had to contend with, we give it in the chief's own words, as they were recorded by Mr. Belcourt.

"I realize," he said, "that thou wishest for our happiness. Thy words are wise, thy mouth is good. The Manitou who made the French has made thy heart. But I told thee last year what I thought. I have since seen our own Manitou; here is what he told me. The Great Spirit is in heaven; it is he that made the whites, with white clay. Our Manitou, he that made us wretched as we are, is within the earth and not in heaven. He made us with black earth, and that is why we are not white like the French. Yes, our Manitou Father is in the earth, and the earth is our mother. The sun is his son and the moon his daughter, while the stars are the numerous children of the sun and moon. I have seen our Manitou; look at him. Here he is as he appeared to

me." Which saying he pointed to a round stone daubed with vermillion.*

Such are the coarse artifices to which the Prince of Darkness has recourse to keep the poor Indians from the light of the Gospel.

Rev. Geo. Dugas claims that Mr. Belcourt founded the mission on Rainy Lake in the spring of 1838.⁷ That this is scarcely exact would appear from the fact that, as late as the summer of 1840, an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company named Allan Macdonell was writing to Bishop Provencher: "I understand that my worthy friend Mr. Belcourt is on the eve of starting on a mission to Lac la Pluie. . . . I feel it a duty incumbent on me to inform Your Lordship that there are already two Wesleyan missionaries established there, sent out from England by permission and under the patronage of the Hudson's Bay Company."⁸

Just at that time the great commercial corporation scarcely relished the idea of seeing missions, especially if devoted to Catholic interests, established within its vast dominions. Not very long before Macdonell's letter of warning its directing body had voted an order of the day whereby it was decided that "neither the Protestant nor the Catholic missionaries would be encouraged or assisted in extend-

*St. Paul's Mission, 9th Nov., 1840.

⁷*Monseigneur Provencher*, p. 182.

⁸Fort Garry, 29th June, 1840.

ing their labours beyond the limits of the colony without its special consent."⁹

But Provencher derived his authority from a higher Power. Counting on God alone he founded the mission of Rainy Lake (1840) through the instrumentality of Mr. Belcourt. There the difficulties did not all come from the Indians, depraved and little religious as they were. Lac la Pluie, or Rainy Lake, had been intermittently attended to by Catholic priests, whose first visit dated from 1816.¹⁰ According to Alexander Ross, the Wabassimong mission had just commenced to take root when the Wesleyans from Canada reached Lac la Pluie. The Presbyterian historian thus exposes his opinion on the situation created by their arrival:

"We certainly think, as they [the Catholics] were the first, they had the best right; but, notwithstanding all this, at Lac la Pluie, the Wesleyans commenced their mission in opposition to the Catholics, and here the work of strife began between them, as if the country had not been wide enough for both, without interfering with each other."¹¹

Then, after recording the zeal and self-sacrifice of the priests and their final failure, he says that "the success of the Wesleyans at Lac la Pluie was not greater than that of their rivals. Mr. Jacobs, one of

⁹March 7th, 1838.

¹⁰A large cross had then been erected by Mr. Tabeau, which was still standing in 1841.

¹¹"The Red River Settlement," p. 288.

the last Wesleyan missionaries stationed there, was one day conversing with the writer on the subject. 'We have,' said he, 'been labouring there for the last eleven years, according to the usual system, without being able to form a school, or make a single convert.' Such were the laurels they gained by their interference and opposition."¹²

But we must not anticipate. When, in June, 1840, Rev. A. Belcourt left for Rainy Lake, he heard on the way that, apart from the antagonism due to the presence of the Protestant ministers, the Indians were much incensed against him because it was reported that a late decision of the Council of Assiniboia against the further supplying of liquor to the natives had been taken at his instigation. It was even freely stated that his life would scarcely be safe there.

On the way he endeavoured to feed with God's word the numerous bands of aborigines he met, but generally with indifferent success. An excuse for that religious apathy was founded on a story which was then going the rounds of the camp-fires. A Lake Superior Indian had died a short time after having received baptism. When he tried to penetrate into the abode of the Christians in the other world, he was repulsed therefrom, under the plea that the place was not for Indians. But when he made for that assigned to his own compatriots, he was refused admittance because he was baptized. As there was

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 289.

no room for him in the land of the departed, he had come back to life.

Belcourt was equal to the emergency. After having ridiculed the tale of the Indians, as he saw that they were not convinced by his expostulations, he exclaimed:

"Well, then, receive baptism in order to rise again after your death and enjoy a second life."

It was in the course of that journey that, on the 15th of July, he planted a large cross at Wabassimong ("the White Dog"), as a warning that he was taking possession of the place for a mission. At Rainy Lake he saw few Indians, owing to a famine that had scattered them; but the Canadian employees and their halfbreed children who, for the same reason, had been sent off to shift for themselves as best they could, no sooner heard of his arrival than they returned to the fort and profited by his ministrations.

On his return from that post, he had evidence that even little enlightened Indians could very well distinguish between the shepherd and the hireling. He met a native from a distant land whom he questioned as to the religious conditions of his compatriots.

"Do you pray¹⁸ over there?"

"Some do."

"That's well. Listen to your priest, and become good Indians. By the way, what is the name of that priest?"

¹⁸That is, are you Christians, do you worship God?

At this question, the stranger and his wife burst into laughter. Then the man said:

"Oh, he is one of those would-be priests that are married. That's why I, for one, do not listen to him."

According to Alexander Ross the missionary station of Baie des Canards, or Duck Bay, on Lake Winnipegosis, was commenced in 1841. But Belcourt tells us himself that he inaugurated it during the first week of October, 1840, in the same manner as he had done at Wabassimong, that is, by the erection of a large cross.¹⁴ In the same trip the indefatigable missionary pushed even as far as Qu'Appelle River, returning in the fall to St. Paul's, which was as yet the only mission with a resident priest. Rev. Mr. Mayrand had filled his place during his absence.

The following year (1841) another priest came up from Canada to Red River. This was Rev. Jean Edouard Darveau, then twenty-seven years old, who had offered his services for the distant mission of the Columbia, but for whom no passage could be arranged with the Hudson's Bay Company caravan to the Far West. This young priest spent six months studying Sautaux under Mr. Belcourt, after which he set out for Duck Bay, on Lake Winnipegosis, while his professor was leaving (May 18, 1842), with men and materials to build a church at Wabassimong.

Arrived at Duck Bay, the young missionary was

¹⁴St. Paul's Mission, 9th Nov., 1840.

pained to see that an Anglican clergyman, the very first who moved a foot on behalf of the Indians since the departure of Mr. West in 1823,¹⁸ was starting in the neighbourhood an opposition station, which contributed not a little to bewilder the natives and make them uncertain as to the line of conduct they should adopt. This was a Rev. Abraham Cowley, a representative of the Church Missionary Society. Darveau's first labours, however, were not entirely fruitless. Yet, the differences in creed by which they were confronted sadly puzzled the aborigines. As one of the chiefs once said to the priest: "You tell us there is but one religion that can save us, and that you have got it; Mr. Cowley tells us that he has got it; now which of you white men am I to believe?" After a long pause, as he smoked his pipe and talked with his people, he turned round and said: "I will tell you the resolution I and my people have come to. It is this: when you both agree, and travel the same road, we will travel with you; till then, however, we will adhere to our own religion."¹⁹

This missionary activity involved not only zeal and self-denial, but also considerable expense, especially as, at that early period and with so refractory Indians; it was thought necessary to follow the general custom of the country, and pay for any services rendered. Canoes and crews, or even mere companions, occasioned an outlay which left nothing for

¹⁸"The Red River Settlement," p. 74.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 292.

the poor missionary; and whenever it was a question of building, those who were to have the benefit of the structures that were put up contributed very little, if at all, towards defraying the expenses of the same.

Yet the resources of the bishop were so small that, at times, some were tempted to find him too parsimonious. Alex. Ross has the following in this connection: "This their poverty [of the Catholics] must be admitted to redound much to their honour. Where a new mission is contemplated, and the missionary named, the bishop allows him £10 to fit himself out, then adds his benediction, and the thing is settled."¹⁷

Alex. Ross was not the only Protestant author to notice the drawbacks under which the Catholic missionaries laboured. "The Catholic priests experienced many difficulties," writes Alexander Begg, "and, being poor, [they] had not the same opportunity to extend their labours as rapidly as the Protestant missionaries. What they lacked in means, however, they made up by zealous perseverance, and gradually they made their way midst drawbacks and disappointments."¹⁸

Just then (1841) a reason for even stricter economy would have been derived from the fact that the Bishop of Juliopolis lost £369 in the failure of the Hammersley bank, had it not been for the timely

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 290, 291. "The Protestant mission had also funds at its command, with the aid of which Mr. Cowley could feed and clothe his converts, while the poor priest had nothing to offer them but instruction" (*Ibid.*, p. 291).

¹⁸"History of the Northwest," vol. I., pp. 281, 282.

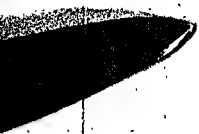
generosity of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, which made up for his loss by voting him a grant of 15,880 francs.¹⁰

Funds were indeed needed. His Indian missions were just about entering into a period of development towards the Far West, whose consoling results were to compensate for the disappointments of the Middle West. The important Fort Edmonton, or of the Prairies, as it was still called, had for a commander a Catholic, Mr. John Rowand, who represented to the religious authorities that the minister who had passed the winter with him was making absolutely no headway with the Indians, the majority of whom were Crees, and seemed willing to listen to "True Praying Ones," as they termed the Catholic priests. The gentleman who was thus indirectly inviting the Catholic missionaries to his distant domains was considerably more than a common trading *bourgeois*. He had been in the fur trade since 1800, when he entered the Northwest Company, and, having been promoted to the Hudson's Bay Company grades of chief trader and chief factor, he had been entrusted with the direction of the combined districts of the Saskatchewan and Athabasca. In the Far West he was known as "the Governor." His territory extended as far east as Fort Cumberland, which was also under his superintendence.

¹⁰Provencher to Bishop P. F. Turgeon, Coadjutor of Quebec; St. Boniface, 17th, 18th and 19th June, 1841.



JOHN ROWAND, ESQ.,
H. B. Co. Chief Factor.



The Canadian or halfbreed population immediately under him at Fort Edmonton, including women and children, was about eighty when Father de Smet visited him in the winter of 1845-46. That great travelling missionary describes that post as a most prosperous establishment, and the country it stood in as a land of plenty. The western governor has left the reputation of a man who shone more by his indomitable energy and fearlessness than by his Christian gentleness; but to De Smet Rowand was one who "unites to all the amiable and polite qualities of a perfect gentleman those of a sincere and hospitable friend; his goodness and paternal tenderness render him a true patriarch amidst his charming and numerous family. He is esteemed and venerated by all the surrounding tribes, and though advanced in age, he possesses extraordinary activity."²⁰

²⁰From one of Father De Smet's letters, dated Fort Jasper, April 16, 1846. John Rowand was a native of Dublin, Ireland, where he was born probably between the years 1775 and 1780. He came to Canada in his early youth, and soon entered the service of the Northwest Company. In 1804 he was a clerk at Fort des Prairies, or Edmonton, and, at the time of the fusion of his concern with the Hudson's Bay Company (1821), he became a chief trader in the resulting corporation, being advanced in 1825 to the much coveted rank of chief factor. He was for a long time the superintendent of the immense Saskatchewan District, with headquarters at Edmonton, and he died suddenly (summer of 1854) at Fort Pitt, where his eldest son John commanded. His bones were afterwards taken to Montreal, where they were buried in the Catholic cemetery.

Chief Factor Rowand was a typical trader, a miniature emperor, who possessed the impetuosity of the Irish in an exaggerated degree. He zealously guarded the privileges of his corporation, and, though by no means a big man, he knew how to make himself respected by the whites and feared by the Indians. Playing on the superstitions of the latter, he would awe them into subjection by exhibitions of

A French halfbreed, by the name of Picher, had even come all the way from that distant post in order to beg for a missionary. As none was available at the time, it was agreed that Rev. Mr. Thibault, who knew the Cree dialect, should repair thither in the spring of the following year. This meant a journey of some 2,200 miles across the prairies of the Canadian West.

Pursuant to this arrangement, Thibault left April 20, 1842, and on May 27th he arrived at Fort Carlton, where he passed over a week, instructing, confessing and marrying the employees of the fort, and baptizing their children. On June 19th he reached his destination, after a trip on horseback, or with a Red River cart that was to bring salvation to the door of many a poor soul.

With the conveniences which civilization has placed at the disposal of the modern wayfarer, it is impossible to form a correct idea of the perils and

chemical and other wonders, such as the effervescence of Seidlitz powders or the strange results of other mixtures.

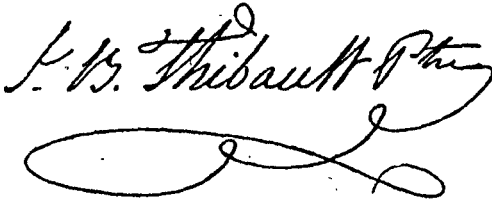
As to the whites, they all knew that he must not be trifled with, and some would occasionally be made to feel the effects of his temper. He was once a member of a large dinner party where most of the guests were of pronounced anti-Catholic propensities. As they were to drink the health of some personage, someone started a song in which the Pope was coarsely derided. This was more than old Rowand could stand.

"I am a Catholic," he cried out in a rage, "and I shall never allow the head of my religion to be insulted in my presence."

And off flew his glass to the head of the singer! This incident caused one of the guests to remark that if Mr. Rowand did not often *kneel* in a church, he none the less knew how to *stand* for his Church.

The wife of John H. McTavish, of whom we shall have occasion to speak in connection with the Red River troubles, was the daughter of Chief Factor Rowand. So was that of the Hon. James McKay.

fatigues such a voyage involved. Barring the dangers due to the wild hordes of Indians, constantly clashing with one another and ever ready for robbery and pillage, the missionary had many a time to ford swollen rivers with the water up to his neck, or swim across streams while clinging to the mane of his horse. And then who will adequately picture

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "L. B. Thibault" followed by a large, decorative flourish.

REV. MR. THIBAUT'S SIGNATURE.

to himself the weariness of a six-month ride under the deadly rays of the sun, tempered by no other shelter or shadow than that afforded by one's horse, with improper food, numberless accidents and unmentionable hardships?

Things ran hardly more smoothly when the famous and exceedingly primitive Red River carts replaced horse-riding. "I have broken two axles and am having a third put on," Thibault once wrote,²¹ to illustrate one of the inevitable concomitants of travelling, without a trace of a road, with vehicles in the construction of which not a particle of iron entered.

At Fort Edmonton the missionary was well received. In spite of the misrepresentations and un-

²¹To Rev. J. A. Mayrand, who quotes him in a letter to Provencher, 31st July, 1843.

derhand dealings of the Protestant minister, his mission to the Crees was as successful as it could possibly have been under the circumstances. He even received the visit of a band of Blackfeet, "the most wicked Indians of these regions," he writes.²² Through an interpreter he announced to them the Good Tidings, which were listened to with the greatest respect. Then the braves bade him a solemn adieu in their own fashion, that is, by passing their hands over his head, his shoulders, his breast and his arms. Finally, affectionately pressing his hand in theirs, they departed one after another, but not before they had laid at his feet their good resolutions for the future.

"Thy words are engraved in my heart; I shall follow thy path," said one. "I have not been a very bad man; yet I resolve henceforth to become better," remarked another, who added that he carried the missionary in his heart as a result of his having had compassion on him. A third was weighed down by a less clean past, or possibly was humbler. "I have had a bad heart," he said; "I have been a wicked man. I feel shame in thy presence; have pity on me. I promise to lead a different life now that I have seen and heard thee."

Only words, the reader will perhaps think. Yes, words, but in some cases the forerunners of deeds. On this and similar occasions Thibault was only sowing, and though the evangelical seed did not grow

²²To his father, 8th July, 1842.

into the harvest that might have been expected, it must be remembered that, had it not been for these early impressions and their healthful consequences, the history of the Blackfoot nation might have been written with considerably more blood, after the time for the supreme trial had come for it many years later.

Mr. Thibault returned to the Red River, which he reached October 20, 1842, after having baptized 353 children, blessed twenty marriages and admitted four persons to their first communion. In addition to these consoling results, he brought home a petition to the governor signed by halfbreeds and Indians of the Far West, asking for a permanent Catholic mission in their midst, despite that official's previous decision to the contrary. "All the Métis and Indians he met have abandoned the Methodist ministers to embrace truth," gladly wrote Mgr. Provencher to the Bishop of Quebec.

These were too propitious beginnings to be left unimproved. Therefore the following year saw again Mr. Thibault in the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains. He then had examples of the extremities to which Indians may go when not under the influence of the King of Peace. He was at Fort Pitt when, during the night of August 15, 1843, another party of Blackfeet attacked the Crees camped by the stockade of the fort. As a consequence one of the latter was killed with an arrow, after his horse had been struck by a bullet. On the morrow, a Black-

foot having been found who was seriously wounded, he was instantly riddled with bullets, after which he was scalped. Then his hands, feet, arms and legs were cut off and attached as trophies to the necks of horses, or suspended from long poles, round which dancing was kept day and night. Presently, about sixty Crees left on a campaign of reprisals, and returned after some time with about a hundred horses they had captured from the Blackfeet. They had lost one man and killed a Blackfoot. In another part of the same region, twenty Blackfeet were also slain by Assiniboines from whom they had stolen horses.

Such were the ways of the "noble redskin!"

Mr. Thibault was a naturally timid or bashful man. Dauntless and outspoken with the natives, he did not feel at home with the whites of the Hudson's Bay Company's forts.²³ This led to the early foundation (1842) of Ste. Anne's Mission, some distance west of Edmonton, which for a time he used as a centre whence he went forth to evangelize the surrounding tribes.

While these apostolic excursions were stirring the Far West, Bishop Provencher was faithfully discharging at St. Boniface the more monotonous duties of a parish priest, aided, as a rule, by Mr. Mayrand, who was now also attending to the spiritual wants of the parish of St. Francois-Xavier.

²³At all events, the self-assertiveness and rather autocratic ways of Chief Factor Rowand were not calculated to make him feel at home at Fort Edmonton.



REV. MR. THIBAULT.

CHAPTER XI.

DEATH OF DARVEAU AND COMING OF THE FIRST NUNS.

1843-1844.

The population of the Red River Settlement was 5,143 in March, 1843. Of these 2,798 were Catholics, and 2,345 Protestants. There were 870 families, of whom 571 were halfbreeds or Indians, 152 French Canadians, 61 Orkneymen, 49 Scotchmen, 22 Englishmen. Switzerland, Wales, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Germany each contributed two heads of families, and Poland and the United States one.

Just then a question of the utmost importance to this motley population was claiming the attention of the leading minds of the colony. Several whites, knowing the insatiable passion of the Indians for strong drink, did not scruple to distil spirits, which they too often used as a means of bringing the natives and others to the accomplishment of their ends. Hence the measure of the council (June 8, 1840), which we have already mentioned. This forbade giving or bartering even beer to the Indians. The following year (June 25th) the same body legislated against the private distillation of spirits.

And yet the evil would not abate. Therefore it was deemed expedient that, in a collective memorial, the Bishops of Quebec, Montreal, Kingston and

Toronto should draw the attention of the London authorities of the Hudson's Bay Company to the pernicious effects which the indiscriminate use of intoxicants had on the Indians, and ask them to take such measures as would seem most efficacious in stopping the unholy traffic. The answer was an evasive promise to do what was possible to further the object of the petition, which, it was thought at London, somewhat exaggerated the evil.

At home, probably at the instance of the religious authorities themselves, a petition dated June 17, 1843, from various halfbreeds headed by one Michel Genton, *alias* Dauphiné, Maximilien Genton, *alias* Dauphiné, and François Bennean (*sic* in the copy of the council's minutes), evidently Bruneau, the quondam college pupil of Provencher, asked that, since no other means could be devised to check the illicit manufacture of spirits then prevailing in Assiniboia, a public distillery be established, with the proper restrictions. This measure was adopted by the council two years later.¹

Meanwhile, as it was evident that, in such a thinly populated territory, only the influence of religion could at all eradicate the evil, Bishop Provencher commissioned his priests never to lose an occasion of preaching against it. Hence we soon see the zealous prelate recording the fact that Mr. Mayrand "has profited by this time of affliction to cry out against drunkenness, to which in spite of this several

¹June 16th, 1845.

were addicted. He has explained temperance and persuaded a good many to adopt it, limiting at first the trial to the next spring." This was written on April 19, 1844.

Mr. Darveau was no less zealous in the matter. "Mr. Darveau tells me," writes the prelate, "that he also has preached temperance and that nearly everyone has enrolled his name in its behalf." He specially praises that missionary's exertions. "Mr. Mayrand is always weak," he remarks, by way of saying that he cannot be expected to do much. But "Mr. Darveau has done good wherever he has penetrated."

Poor Darveau! The time was near at hand when he could not do any other good than that which should result from the remembrance of his zeal and apostolic virtues!

In the summer of 1844, Mgr. Signay, who, on July 13th of that year, had been named the first titular Archbishop of Quebec, was startled to receive the following from the Bishop of Juliopolis:

"People have come from the end of Lake Winnipeg to tell me that Mr. Darveau has been drowned, as well as the two men he had with him. He had left this place³ during the month of March, so that he might have some time to instruct the Indians of Duck Bay and proceed, on the breaking up of the ice, to Le Pas, a mission he opened last year. I have

²Montreal, Hôtel-Dieu, 19th April, 1844.

³St. Boniface.

learned that he had left Duck Bay in the evening, and had camped a short distance therefrom. It is likely that he perished in setting out on the morrow, as his canoe, his belongings and his body, as well as that of Jean-Baptiste Boyer, a halfbreed from the White Horse Plains, have been found near his camp. It is the Indians who have found everything. They have left the bodies on the beach, taken to Duck Bay (to the house or the chapel) part of the goods, and then gone to apprise of this some halfbreeds who were making salt beyond the chapel. Two men have immediately left to bury the bodies, either on the spot or in the chapel. An Indian who was also with him has not yet been found."⁴

Such was the first account of the melancholy event. Such it remained for a long time among the whites, though soon foul play was suspected among the natives, and little by little, the truth became known to a few. To-day we are in a position to give an authentic account of Rev. Darveau's end.⁵

In the first place, to show how perfectly true was his bishop's remark that he was a man full of zeal and activity, who "little feared those privations to

*July 29th, 1844.

⁴And for this we are partially indebted to the Rev. J. C. Camper, O.M.I., a veteran missionary to the Sautaux, who has known several of the Indians connected with the tragedy. He speaks their language as well as themselves, and they could conceal nothing from him. It will be noticed that his narrative fits in exactly with the references to the event and those who unwittingly prepared it, which we glean from "The Rainbow of the North," a book the reverend gentleman has never seen, any more than Darveau's last letter, which we have also unearthed.

which a missionary is often exposed," we may state that, on St. Patrick's Day, 1843, he had left St. Boniface for Duck Bay, on Lake Winnipegosis. Having reached that immense body of water, which was then slumbering under a heavy blanket of ice, he left behind his man with the toboggan and started at a good pace for the house of a Pierre Chartrand, with whom he was acquainted. Soon after a terrible snowstorm broke out, and, in the impossibility of seeing anything, he lost his bearings and roamed aimlessly about, absolutely blinded by the fine snow that was falling to the accompaniment of a furious wind.

When his man reached Chartrand's house, the Canadian learned with stupefaction of what had happened. He immediately set out in search of the too light-hearted priest, wondering whether he would find him dead or alive. And lo! after some time spent in looking for the imprudent wanderer, there was Mr. Darveau, who had been two nights and one day without fire or anything to eat, in the midst of a scorching blizzard. He lost no time in narrating his experiences or dwelling on his sufferings.

"Have you anything to eat? I am hungry," were the words with which he greeted Chartrand. Apparently he did not see anything worth mentioning in his adventure, and in a letter he wrote afterwards on that and the following trip, he does not refer to it except to say that he suffered much during his journey of eighty or ninety leagues.

Arrived at Duck Bay, he spent his time in instructing such Indians as would listen to him, and during the summer he made some missionary excursions along the shores of the lake.

Le Pas, a little below the junction of the Carrot River with the Saskatchewan, had been a trading post of some importance during the French regime. It had also received several times the visit of the Catholic priest since the establishment of the Church in the Red River valley. Mr. Darveau heard that the Anglicans contemplated sending a clergyman there. Full of zeal for the propagation of the true faith, he decided to go and see for himself whether it would not be possible to forestall the minister. A year or two previous, an Indian who went by the name of Henry Budd had established himself at that place, who was acting in the capacity of catechist and schoolmaster combined, under the auspices of the Church of England. In view of what was to happen, we leave it to the reader to judge of the advisability of putting a full-blooded Indian in the place of a missionary among natives such as those of Lake Winnipegosis.

On the way to Le Pas, Darveau having halted at a camp of Indians, one of the two men he had hired and paid for the trip refused to go farther. He even asked for provisions which, after the loss of the money he had already advanced him, the missionary did not feel justified in giving him. Thereupon, the Indian, a Muskegong Cree called Shetakon, mut-

tered words of dissatisfaction, and left. His employer found another man, continued his voyage and arrived at Le Pas, August 28, 1843.

The missionary passed five weeks in the place, a prey to the petty persecutions and threats of those who sided with the Protestant catechist. Even forbearing Darveau, who had found no words to expatiate on his physical sufferings, cannot help insisting on the disloyal tactics that were used against him and his people. He writes of his stay at Le Pas:

"Hell has had recourse to all its wiles, at first to drive me away, and then to render useless my efforts. They came to warn me, evidently bent on intimidation, that if I did not depart they were going to drive me away. When they saw that I was determined to stay until they should drag me, hands and feet tied up, from the house I was in,* presents were lavished on the men and their wives, and promises even more so. They would come and



REV. MR. DARVEAU'S SIGNATURE.

snatch away the young people from the catechism to make them go to school. My two servants had also their share of the storm. . . . As soon as an Indian would come up, he was surrounded by Protestants, who did not let him alone before he had con-

*He was the guest of an old halfbreed from Michillimakinac, named Constant, who had found him a house.

sented to go to the sermon that was delivered by a native. . . . To render Catholics more odious they gave them the name of *Windigo*, a fantastic being whose name suffices to make children tremble and puts to flight grown-up people.”

The Catholic priest was represented as a dreadful man, who brought death in his wake, and everyone was cautioned to have nothing to do with him or his. “Among my audience,” adds the missionary, “there was an old man who so dreaded *prayer*,⁸ that he did not even dare look at the Catholic Ladder we owe to the zeal of Mr. Blanchet. ‘I fear the magical power of that piece of paper,’ he said.” Whereupon, unsuspecting Mr. Darveau wonders “how such a strange error should have penetrated to this distant land.” The reader will perhaps wonder himself at the missionary’s wonder.

Yet his stay at Le Pas was not entirely fruitless. He left on October 7th, promising his catechumens that he would come back to establish a permanent mission in their midst the following spring. Here is the reference of the “Rainbow of the North,” a little book published in 1854 under the auspices of

⁸St. François-Xavier, 7th Dec., 1843. A *windigo* is, in the eyes of the Indians, a person possessed of some evil spirit, a demoniac, a cannibal, or both combined, whom it is customary with them to *slay* at the first opportunity. It is not long since the murder of such a man occurred north of Edmonton. Even the dullest reader will easily guess who it was who, in this particular case, originated such wild stories about a Catholic priest, and who was ultimately responsible for the petty persecution he had to endure. If not prompted by a fanatic, Indians will simply let severely alone a missionary whose ministrations are not to their liking.

⁹That is, the Catholic religion.

the Church Missionary Society, of London, to his passage at Le Pas: "Mr. Budd had been in the summer of 1843 greatly tried by the arrival of a Romish priest who came with the undisguised intention of drawing away the people. He erected a large wooden cross, marked out the sight of his intended house, and after baptizing about twenty of the *heathen* in the neighbourhood⁹ returned to the Red River, intending to come back in the spring to take his permanent abode there."¹⁰

True to his word, Mr. Darveau did leave for Le Pas in the beginning of June, 1844. He had for companions a halfbreed named Jean-Baptiste Boyer, and a Muskegong Indian boy. Not far from Duck Bay, the little party camped for the night. There they were joined by a few Muskegongs, among whom was Shetakon, the missionary's unfaithful servant of the preceding summer. When the Indians had landed, Darveau attempted to hold conversation with them on religious subjects; but Shetakon drew apart another old man named Chimekatis, and represented to him that the priest was the cause of the epidemic which had lately ravaged the tribe. Therefore, he added, we must do away with him before he has brought the Indians of Le Pas to his way of praying and thereby caused their destruction. The missionary's exhortations to embrace the true faith still

⁹An untruth. Though he does not give the number of his baptisms, or the locality of the baptized, Darveau mentions at least five of the latter who belonged to Le Pas.

¹⁰*Op. cit.*, p. 154.

accentuated the ill-will of the old men against him, and sealed his doom.

And lest their crime should be made known to the whites, they found it necessary to kill Boyer first, after which one of the old men shot at the priest. But so nervous was he at the thought of the possible consequences of his act, that he fired wide of the mark.

The guns of both men were thus emptied, and their intended victim might attempt to escape while they would reload them. Hence they urged a third man, called Vizena, the son-in-law of Chimekatis, to kill the priest.

"Shoot him. . . . Dispatch him quick!" cried out Chimekatis.

But Vizena did not feel up to killing a priest. So his father-in-law excitedly insisted:

"Shoot him, I say, or he will kill us himself."¹¹

Reluctantly, Vizena fired the fatal shot, and Mr. Darveau fell by the side of his canoe.

The Muskegong boy being one of their own people, was spared, but strongly cautioned to say nothing of what had happened. Yet, as he occasionally persisted in threatening to expose the murderers, one of them took him out one day to hunt, and he was never seen again.

The bodies were left on the beach, where they remained many a day undiscovered. When found, they were in too advanced a state of decomposition to

¹¹Meaning probably by his black art, his occult powers.

allow of examination. Mr. Darveau's body had been dragged over the sand by a bear, whose tracks were plainly visible, and one of his legs was partially eaten up.

Meanwhile the report was being circulated that the priest and his men had been drowned, though the lake was perfectly calm when they left Duck Bay. Darveau being known as rather fearless, if not imprudent, on the water, the news easily found credence with those who did not know of the whisperings by the camp-fires that told a totally different story. The black deed was consummated. The *windigo* of the Protestant catechist at Le Pas had met with the fate all his fellows must expect among the Indians. At the same time, the Church of St. Boniface had lost one of her most promising sons.

As far as could be ascertained, the tragedy of Lake Winnipegosis must have taken place on June 4, 1844.¹²

Such are, after a careful digest of manuscript documents and other sources of information, the circumstances which attended the death of Rev. Mr. Darveau. Those documents refer to the explicit depositions of Indians directly or indirectly concerned in the drama, whom the veteran Father

¹²We may mention, as an epilogue to the tragedy, that Shetakon himself met with a miserable death, away from home. As to Chimekatis, who had pressed his son-in-law so hard to kill the priest, his end was even worse. Blind and deaf for a long time, he was burnt alive in his shanty. Vizena publicly admitted before his own death that "he was going to burn for two reasons: he had killed his two wives, and had shot Mr. Darveau."

Camper knew personally and to whose declarations he is a living witness. There are a few discrepancies in the details, but one thing is absolutely certain: Darveau's death was due to malice, not the result of an accident. It is likewise highly probable, if not absolutely certain, that hatred for the Catholic faith and a superstitious dread of its ministers inspired by a representative of another denomination were the real cause of the same.

Nothing could properly compensate for so precious a life. However, seventeen days after the untimely end of the northern missionary, an event of a most different nature brought joy to many a heart, especially that of Mgr. Provencher, in the southern part of the Middle West. We have seen that this prelate had scarcely been six months in the Red River Settlement when he manifested the wish to have nuns for his schools, or at least for those frequented by girls. The Misses Nolin had, it is true, rendered him valuable services in that line; but, with fickleness characteristic of their race, they had tired of the work at St. Boniface.

Yet, they were still engaged in it, but at St. François-Xavier, when the bishop received from a Visitation nun of Grasse, in France, a letter wherein the writer, named Angélique Aimée Courmel, offered to start an educational institution for girls at Red River, or on the Columbia. This was in 1838.¹³ Provencher wrote for information and asked for testi-

¹³Provencher; letter dated 6th Aug., 1838.

monials from the nun's bishop, but received nothing. He then applied to the Bishop of Amiens, also in France; but his negotiations with that prelate fell through. In 1842 he begged the Bishop of Quebec to get him sisters of any Order, and then wrote to Mgr. Loras, of Dubuque, in the United States, always in the same strain, but also with a like result.

Seeing that nothing availed, he resolved to pass into Canada by way of the United States. He found nuns at Dubuque, but they could not speak French. In the vicinity of St. Louis, he tried to obtain some of the Sisters of St. Joseph, who had a vast establishment there; but he could not persuade their superiors to undertake a foundation in far-off Red River. At Montreal Mgr. Bourget recommended to him the Grey Nuns as the best qualified for the work he had to give them. After some negotiations, Provencher was delighted to see his offers accepted by the Superior-General of that Order.

The Sisters of Charity, commonly known as Grey Nuns, from the colour of their habit, were founded in 1738 by Madame D'Youville, a sister of La Jemmeraye, Lavérendrye's nephew and lieutenant in his western explorations. It is a tradition current in that Institute that the foundress used to send to the Indians of the then desolate West clothes she had prepared with her own hands, and it would seem as if her daughters had had for a long time some sort of presentiment that they would one day follow their "uncle" into the land of his last sleep.

From Montreal Bishop Provencher passed over to France, inasmuch as, in addition to his own territory east of the Rocky Mountains, he interested himself in the welfare of the still less favoured missions of Oregon. He crossed the ocean accompanied by his very first confrère in the apostolate, the Rev. Mr. Dumoulin, whom, on his return, he would fain have taken back with him to Red River.¹⁴ Though this voyage seemed to have had no immediate results as far as his clergy was concerned, we shall soon see that it was far from having been taken in vain. From a financial standpoint it was a success, the Propagation of the Faith making him a grant of 30,000 francs.

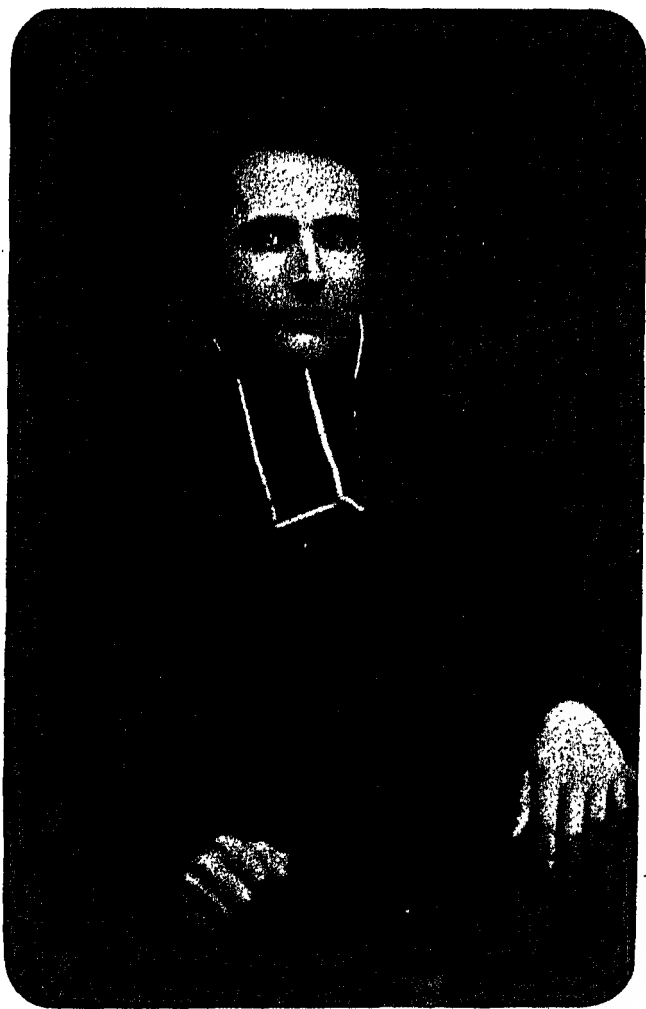
In Canada he found two precious subjects in the persons of Revs. L. F. Richer-Lafèche (better known as Lafèche), who was just terminating his ecclesiastical studies, and Olivier Caron, for whom he seems to have taken a special liking.¹⁵ But when he returned from France to Canada, reaching Montreal March 25, 1844, the latter did not find himself strong enough to go west.

This was a great disappointment for the bishop, who had already obtained from the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company passages in his brigade¹⁶ of

¹⁴Provencher to Mgr. Turgeon, Bishop of Sidyme, 14th Dec., 1843.

¹⁵Rev. Louis François Richer-Lafèche was born 4th Sept., 1818, at Ste. Anne de la Pérade, Lower Canada, and studied at the college of Nicolet. He was ordained priest in that town 7th January, 1844.

¹⁶In the language of the fur-traders, a brigade was any considerable assemblage of boats, canoes, or even pack-horses, loaded with furs or the equipment of the various forts.



REV. MR. LAFLÈCHE.



DEATH OF DARVEAU AND COMING OF FIRST NUNS 185

canoes for two priests, besides himself, and four sisters, at the much reduced price of £175. Fortunately he found an acceptable substitute for Mr. Caron in Rev. Joseph Bourassa, of Lévis,¹⁷ who was admitted to the priesthood April 14, 1844, that is, just in time to leave with his new Ordinary.

The latter was then ailing at the hospital of Montreal. On April 27th, three days after the sisters themselves had departed, not without very excusable misgivings and heart-rendings, Mgr. Provencher embarked for St. Boniface with his two missionaries, the bishop in the governor's own canoe, and the young priests in other craft.

Governor Simpson was proverbially quick in his travels. He could stand no delays, and hardly granted any resting time to his crew. Therefore, at Sault Ste. Marie, Bishop Provencher ordered the two priests to accompany the nuns while he would go on with Sir George. The first ladies who left everything in the east to answer the call of duty in the wild West deserve to see their names go down to posterity. They were Sisters Valade, superior, Lagrave, Coutlée and Lafrance.

The first canoe, with the bishop and the governor, reached St. Boniface on the 31st of May, but the others did not put in an appearance there before June 21, 1844.

The following Sunday the bishop introduced the good sisters to his flock. Their principal work was,

¹⁷Where he was born, 31st May, 1817.

of course, to be the instruction of the young; but he also counted on them for several branches of industry which he thought useful, if not necessary, to a new population like his. At least one of the nuns was likewise to apply herself to the practice of medicine, a knowledge of which she had previously acquired in anticipation of her office on the banks of the Red. All of them spoke English; but, as they did not feel equal to the task of teaching school in that language, they were to put the last touches to their own education with regard to that point.¹⁸

Pending the construction of special quarters for the ladies, the bishop accommodated them in his stone house, which he had vacated on New Year's Day, 1843, to inhabit that which he had built at the gable end of his cathedral, forming an addition to that edifice measuring 46 by 70 feet.

These improvements looked indeed like the dawn of a new era for the missions of Red River. Yet that new era, with the corresponding expansion in mission work and the cessation of all cares concerning the recruiting of the apostolic labourers, was not properly to commence till the following year.

¹⁸Provencher to Turgeon, Coadjutor of Quebec; Montreal, 9th Nov., 1843.

PART III.

Extension to the North.

CHAPTER XII.

ARRIVAL OF THE OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE.

1844-1847.

Over twenty-five years had now rolled by since the Church had permanently established herself on the banks of the Red River, and, in spite of deeds of heroism, privations and sufferings of all kinds patiently endured, very much indeed remained to be done. True, there was a bishop with a decent cathedral at headquarters; but, in spite of two recent accessions to the ranks of his clergy, that bishop did not have more than four priests at his disposal, in 1844, for the 2,800 white and halfbreed Catholics scattered over a region vast as a kingdom. Of these missionaries, one was to return east the following year, and three were devoting their lives exclusively to the salvation of the Indians. Only two had stayed any length of time in the country and one of them

Mr. Belcourt who, in spite of a prodigious activity and uncommon talents, never had Provencher's sympathies.

would evidently have been preferred away by his ecclesiastical superior.

It cannot be denied that Red River had no charms for the Canadian clergy. In moments of generous self-sacrifice a few had indeed come to labour in that isolated country; but after a sojourn of three or four years, seldom much longer, they had successively slipped out of their bishop's hands. So that it began to be wondered whether the nation which had given so many daring voyageurs and explorers to the West did really possess men endowed with sufficient abnegation to follow those hardy pioneers and save their souls and those of the wild tribes among whom they had cast their lot. Even the great Bishop Plessis had been struck by this momentous question. In answer to a good priest who wanted to go back to Canada after a few years' stay in Red River, he exclaimed: "When one has come to this that he should say: my task is done, it must be because zeal is very dull indeed. Oh! where would now be Canada if the missionaries that came there to plant the faith had not had more constancy? My task is done, did you say. Our task, whoever we may be, will be over only when we shall have spent all our life in devotion to the salvation of souls."²

This inconstancy on the part of Provencher's fellow labourers was all the more galling to the prelate

²Aug. 17th, 1823. Perhaps should we say that they needed the ties created by religious life to devote themselves with some degree of permanency to the duties of a missionary in that wild country.

as, in the diocese next to his own district, that of Dubuque, which had only been a few years in existence, there were already eleven priests, most of whom hailed from France.*

Hence, tired of the endless anxieties and disappointments that had so far attended his endeavours to recruit his clergy from among the secular priests of Canada, Bishop Provencher had thought of securing the coöperation of one of the Orders that flourished in Europe, and he had asked Monseigneur Bourget, of Montreal, to do all he could to get him some Jesuits. In the course of a visit at Rome in 1841, the prelate had an interview with the General of that famous institute. As an outcome of it, the shepherd on the banks of the Red exulted in the thought that he should soon have some of those good fathers with him. His letters bespeak this hope all through 1842, and, at the end of the following year, he had not yet despaired of seeing his dreams realized.⁴

But Providence had other plans. Answering the call of the saintly Bishop of Montreal, the representatives of a much younger religious Order had just settled themselves on the banks of the St. Lawrence. Provencher's attention was called to their wonderful success among the country parishes of Lower Canada. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate, founded in

*Provencher to the Bishop of Quebec; St. Boniface, 30th June, 1842.

⁴Same to P. F. Turgeon, of Sidyme; Montreal, 14th Dec., 1843.

1816 at Aix, in the south of France, by Monseigneur Ch. J. E. de Mazenod, Bishop of Marseilles, were the first missionaries to enter Canada after the cession of that country to England. They had for their object the missions to the poor and lowly, and they were beginning to astonish the eastern provinces by the fervour of their preaching and the extraordinary fruits of conversion that attended their labours.

During his last voyage to Quebec the Bishop of Juliopolis had assisted at the oblation of Father Eusèbe Durocher, one of the first Canadians that were admitted into that Congregation, and this circumstance had naturally drawn his attention to the new body. The Oblates were by profession missionaries to the poor. But it was precisely such missionaries that he wanted; for who was poorer than his own Indians, halfbreeds, or even whites?

The question was just mooted of withdrawing the Red River mission from the jurisdiction of Quebec. This step would make so much the more necessary the services of a religious Order there. If, in spite of the bonds that had so far attached the West to that ancient See, it had been next to impossible to get an adequate supply of priests therefrom, what would it be when those ties should have been severed? Then again, Provencher had counted on the coming of an able priest, Rev. Olivier Caron, who had declined to move at the last moment. The Oblates, therefore, he must have.

It was for his incipient parishes and especially the

promising Indian missions of the far Northwest a question of life or death. "Secular priests," he thought, "will make slow progress; there is no unity in their views, without mentioning the fact that they put their hands to the plough only for a short time, which they always find too long."⁸

Hence he strongly advised the Coadjutor of Quebec, a personal friend of his, to be careful not to thwart vocations to the religious state, because, he remarked, "you will have, returned a hundredfold, what you have given."⁹ And, to be more explicit on the nature of the vocations he meant, he wrote shortly afterwards: "Oh! that I may have some religious, religious, religious! We will do little good and incur heavy expenses as we are at present. There is no unity of views; everyone sees and does his own way. . . . Oh! for Oblates! May God bless their labours and thereby silence those who talk but would not act!"¹⁰ And, ten days later: "If it be true that some Oblates are to come next year, it will be well for me to know of it this winter. . . . If there are any vocations, facilitate them, for we will do nothing with a secular clergy."¹¹

By this last remark it would seem as if, after having been disappointed in the Jesuits, the Bishop of Juliopolis had still his doubts about the coming of

⁸To Rev. C. P. Cazeau; Quebec, 30th June, 1844.

⁹The same to Bishop Signay of Quebec; 26th June, 1844.

¹⁰The same to the same, 26th June, 1844.

¹¹St. Boniface, 6th July, 1844.

the Oblates. Yet he had applied himself to their Superior-General and Founder in the course of his journey to Rome. Saintly De Mazenod, "whose heart was as big as the world," had consented to undertake a foundation at Red River. Humanly speaking this was a most rash resolution. His sons had merely pitched their tents in Lower Canada; how could he think of weakening, if not destroying, the humble beginnings on the banks of the St. Lawrence by attempting in a still much more distant and resourceless land, establishments whose numbers no one could foresee? Could a sufficient personnel be found for both missions in the ranks of the young Institute?

But Monseigneur de Mazenod was a man of immense faith. He yielded to the entreaties of the poor missionary prelate and commissioned Father Guigues, the first Oblate provincial in America (before he became the first Bishop of Ottawa), to send some of his religious to the aid of Provencher. God, who cannot be outdone in generosity, immediately rewarded his servant for his extraordinary trust in His Providence. It is to the establishment of the first Indian missions in Western Canada that must be traced that wonderful development of the then scarcely known Congregation of the Oblates. The thought of the incredible hardships that awaited the missionaries of the Cross in the dreary wastes of North America inflamed the hearts of a multitude of young clerics and mature priests who, leaving

forever the "sweet land of France," thenceforth sallied out yearly to seek out the lost sheep of Israel in the snows of Athabasca and the Mackenzie, without ever uttering a word of regret for the friends and parents they had left in the country of their birth.

Pending these noble flights, we must chronicle the scarcely less meritorious efforts of the pioneers in that hallowed exodus.

According to all previsions, the first Oblates should have reached Red River by the beginning of August, 1845. Yet nobody was coming, and the vigilant watchman over God's people settled there was despairing of seeing them arrive that year when, on August 25th, their canoes were signalled slowly ascending the Red. The good bishop could not possess himself for joy. He immediately went out with Mr. Mayrand and the nuns to receive the missionaries that were to be the saviours of his adopted country. With them were two ladies destined for the nuns' novitiate. But when Provencher looked at the men that were sent him, his first impression partook of the nature of a disappointment. Instead of a band of priests ready for apostolic work, he had before him only one, Rev. Casimir Aubert, accompanied by a young man with a boyish face who seemed scarcely more than an adolescent.

"What!" he exclaimed, "I have asked for men, and they send me a child!"

He soon realized that this "child" was not an

ordinary one, and but a few weeks had elapsed when he asked for many more of his kind.⁹

This wonderful "child" was Brother Alexander Antonin Taché, who was as yet a mere novice in his Order, and a subdeacon in the Church of God. Born at Fraserville, July 23, 1823, of one of the best Canadian families, he was on his mother's side a direct descendant of the discoverer of the country that was to be his for life, the great Lavérendrye. He had studied at the Seminary of Montreal since September 1, 1841, and had lately entered the novitiate of the Oblates at Longueuil,¹⁰ when his superiors had thought that, in spite of his youth and so far uncertain status in his Congregation, he was the right man for the Red River missions.

In contemplating this smooth-faced novice, little did the Bishop of Juliopolis dream that he was resting his eyes on his successor, who was to shed luster on the See of St. Boniface and become the most illustrious man in Western Canada.

The first unfavourable impression over, Provencher wrote to his Quebec friend, the Bishop of Sidyme: "*Deo gratias!* here is at last some seed of religious. It is on this class of men that I have reckoned for a long time, to efficiently promote the Indian missions. Rev. Father Guigues lets me hope for some more next summer. I shall therefore write

⁹"Some more Tachés and Lafêches you may send me without fear."

¹⁰Where he had for master of novices Father Allard, who became a bishop and vicar-apostolic in South Africa.

him. Mr. Thibault wants two; Mr. Laffèche would like to have one also."¹¹

The Pope had directed Provencher to look for somebody whom he might appoint vicar-general and initiate into the machinery of administration. He regretted his inability to comply immediately. Father Aubert, he thought, was the proper man, but he might be objected to on account of his foreign birth. The older among his other priests had few qualifications for the business of a diocese. "They have planed more than studied," he writes, adding that he sees nobody but Laffèche who was only twenty-seven years old. Would not some more secular priests come from Lower Canada, even after the advent of the Oblates? He sincerely hoped so. In fact, this, he was sure, was necessary.¹² But events were to prove that in this he was mistaken. For the next seventeen years not one secular priest was to come to the west who did not soon after join the ranks of the Oblates.

Mr. Mayrand left August 29, 1845, and Father Aubert, with his only novice and prospective confrère, became Mr. Belcourt's pupils in Sauteux at the Bishop's House. Mr. Laffèche had been ailing and, for that reason, became unable to proceed to Lake Ste. Anne and help evangelize the Indians previously visited by Mr. Thibault, who burnt with the

¹¹St. Boniface, 29th August, 1845.

¹²To the Bishop of Sidyme, 25th April, 1844.

desire to go still further north. Mr. Bourassa took his place in this distant mission.

The young priest then set upon building some sort of a residence for the two missionaries in these distant parts, while his confrère, Mr. Thibault, was travelling among the Indians (1844). In the course of his excursions, the latter penetrated into the country of the Chippewayans, a Déné tribe, which received him with open arms.

He was now dealing with an entirely different race of Indians. The Dénés form in North America an extremely important aboriginal family, of which the most populous divisions are to be found in the United States, where they are known under the names of Navahoes and Apaches respectively. These appellations, however, give rise to an entirely wrong idea of what the Dénés are in northern Canada. Naturally timid and cowardly, though by no means above spasms of childish excitement and anger, they are much more religiously inclined, more apt to imitate superiors, because conscious of their own inferiority, and less immoral than their southern neighbours.

Absolutely nomadic through their endless forests and along the immense lakes of their territory—Athabasca, Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes—they have few large agglomerations. As a consequence, sexual promiscuity is less common with them than among the natives of Algonquin or Sioux parentage. They live on the fruits of the hunt rather

than of the chase, though they also seek out large venison animals, such as moose and reindeer or caribou.

Being of a religious turn of mind, they are, for the lack of an enlightened faith, profoundly superstitious. They place an absolute reliance on the supposed occult powers of their shamans, jugglers and medicine-men combined, whose office it is to drive out of the sick evil spirits that are the cause of all bodily ailments, mishaps and contretemps in nature, such as storms or the lack of the proper winds while sailing, the failure of the yearly salmon run, etc. This the shamans claim to accomplish by vigorous incantations or insufflations in the midst of furious dancing to the accompaniment of drumming and special chants.

The Dénés of northern Canada roam in bands more or less numerous—under the conduct of a headman who is often the oldest father of a family—immediately north of the territory of the Crees, with whom they now intermingle in a few places, as far as the confines of the Eskimos. From east to west they extend practically from Hudson Bay to the Pacific coast.

East of the Rocky Mountains, their principal tribes are the Chippewayans or Montagnais who have Lake Athabasca for their main seat, though many important divisions are south of that sheet of water, notably at Ile à la Crosse and Cold Lake; the Beavers, on Peace River and adjacent lands; the

Slaves, west of Great Slave Lake and on the Mackenzie; the Dog-Ribs, between Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes; the Hares, mostly on the east side of the Lower Mackenzie, as well as the Anderson and Macfarlane Rivers, and the Loucheux, on the west side of the lower Mackenzie and over the whole of Alaska save its coasts. Our sixth part will tell us of the habitat of that important stock south of Alaska.

We now return south, to assist at the ordination of Brother Taché, first as deacon, August 31st, that is, the first Sunday after his arrival at St. Boniface, and then as priest, on October 22, 1845. Bishop Provencher had to use the vast powers conferred on him by the Holy See, as the new priest was scarcely more than twenty-two years, two months and a half old.

On the morrow, the novice pronounced his religious vows in presence of Father Aubert, who represented his General in Marseilles. He was now in spite of his youth a full-fledged Oblate father.

According to the original plans of the bishop, he was to stay near him and attend, in conjunction with Mr. Laffèche and the prelate himself, the parishes or missions of St. Boniface, St. François-Xavier, St. Paul of the Sautaux, Our Lady of Mercy (Wabassimong), St. Norbert of Duck Bay, and St. Mary's of Le Pas, a mission which the Bishop of Juliopolis still considered as extant in spite of the valuable life it had cost.

Hence Provencher still felt the need of apostolic workers for the north of his district. "Endeavour to persuade Father Guigues to send me some more good subjects," he wrote in December, 1845. "Both of the fathers that came this year are persons with whom it will always be easy to pull."

Then a final remark of the prelate brings us to the consideration of the good work one of his oldest priests was accomplishing in the west of his vineyard. "Mr. Thibault has baptized 500 children in his expedition of last summer," he writes. These were mostly Chippewayans of Cold Lake, Lac la Biche and Ile à la Crosse, whither he had penetrated as early as 1844. After having passed a few days at Fort Carlton he proceeded to these different places and was delighted at the reception he met with. "The zeal of these poor Indians to hear the word of God and learn how to serve him is extreme," he wrote. "Day and night they were busy repeating the prayers and instructions. Hence I left them with a knowledge of the Our Father, Hail Mary, the Creed, and the way of reciting the beads. . . .

All understand and can explain the chief points of the *Catholic Ladder*.¹³ All those who could make themselves understood in Cree have gone to confession."¹⁴

¹³A sort of chronological history of the world on a long sheet of paper, invented by Mr. (afterwards Archbishop) F. N. Blanchet for the evangelization of his own Indians on the Columbia. We will have a further explanation of it by the end of this chapter and in our last part.

¹⁴To Provencher, Lake Ste. Anne, 23rd December, 1844.

On May 24th, of the following year, Thibault was again at Ile à la Crosse, where he experienced such great consolations that he could not help writing: "It is not possible that any Indian nation should ever be better disposed to embrace our faith than are the Montagnais." Hence he calls for evangelical workers with aptitudes for native languages, as he perceives that the Methodists are already trying to introduce themselves there.

Of course, among simple folk, so child-like in mental make-up as are the Dénés, due allowance must be made for the impressibility of a religious nature, quick to yield to generous impulses, but often too ready to fall back into the routine of a life very different from the Christian ideal. It was no task to convert such people to the truths of our holy religion; the difficulty was to keep them up to our moral standard.

During his apostolic journey of 1845, Mr. Thibault arrived, June 4th, at Methy Portage, the height of land between the Arctic and the Atlantic watersheds, a great rendezvous of the northern and southern canoe brigades of the fur traders. There he met with the same religious enthusiasm. "These good people are inexpressibly docile," he says. "Had God come in person in their midst to make known His will, I believe they would not treat him with more honour or listen more eagerly to His words, though I am nothing but His most unworthy representative."¹⁵

"July 24th, 1845.

So pleased indeed was the good missionary that, yielding to the general enthusiasm, he would fain "have gone down to the very farthest nations that inhabit the earth."

After the extraordinary fervour of the northern Indians, those of the plains (Crees and Assiniboines) appeared to him less than lukewarm in their love of prayer and practice of Christian virtues, absorbed as they were by their incessant wars and debauched by the firewater of the whites.¹⁶

Returning to Edmonton (January 3, 1846), Mr. Thibault met there the celebrated Father de Smet, S.J., who had been looking for the Blackfeet, the irreconcilable enemies of the Flatheads (of the American territory) to whom he intended to make proposals of peace preparatory to having them accept the yoke of the Gospel. He had been for such a long time roaming over the prairie in the hope of meeting them, that his guide finally abandoned him, thus causing untold miseries to the missionary, who had providentially been led to the Hudson's Bay Company's fort.

Four months later, Thibault chronicled the conversion of thirty-six Indians who had previously embraced Methodism.¹⁷

Meantime his companion of Lake Ste. Anne, Mr. Bourassa, was led by the same zeal for the salvation of souls to take the Glad Tidings to the Beaver

¹⁶May 6th, 1846.

¹⁷December 27th, 1845.



Indians, who likewise treated him as the special envoy of the Deity. In an excursion which carried him as far as Peace River and even Lesser Slave Lake, he administered one hundred and seven baptisms. Later on he met representatives of the Sékainais, another Déné tribe, who inhabit, or rather rove over, both sides of the Rocky Mountains. These nomads complained to him that they had been left out of the good things from heaven he was distributing broadcast, and he had to promise them a visit.

Things were running less smoothly in the Red River valley. True, the bishop found cause for earnest congratulation in the good work which the sisters were doing there. In June, 1845, they had already eighty children in their class-rooms.¹⁸ But the venerable prelate, who was now alone for all the parochial work, found his charge becoming rather onerous, owing to a visitation of an epidemic which soon decimated his flock. He was kept very busy visiting the sick and burying the dead. In one day he had as many as nine funerals, and, up to September 3, 1846, one hundred and fifty of his people had died of a kind of contagious diarrhœa at St. Boniface alone, while about as many had succumbed to the same disease at St. François-Xavier, St. Paul, and on the prairie, without counting the ravages from a like cause among the non-Christian Indians.

This unfortunate epidemic breaking out among the

¹⁸Provencher to Signay, 20th June, 1845.

buffalo hunters called for the services of Mr. Belcourt. Father Aubert had left, June 30th, for Winnipeg River and Wabassimong, where he was sorry to find few traces of real Christianity, and Fathers Lafèche and Taché had bidden a long farewell to Bishop Provencher to go and establish a permanent mission at Ile à la Crosse (July 8, 1846).

REV. MR. LAFLECHE'S SIGNATURE.

The Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate had loyally accepted the laborious Indian missions of Provencher. In spite of her own limited personnel, she sent him three more subjects in 1846. The first was a man of great experience and administrative ability, Rev. Father François-Xavier Bermond, who reached St. Boniface on September 5th. Two months later Brother Henri Faraud, a scholastic who had so far received only ecclesiastical tonsure, but was to serve a glorious career in the Far North, arrived (November 9th), with a lay brother, Louis Dubé, the first of that legion of humble co-workers, invaluable aids of the missionaries, who have done so much to make their labours possible. By the end of 1846, hardly fifteen months after the

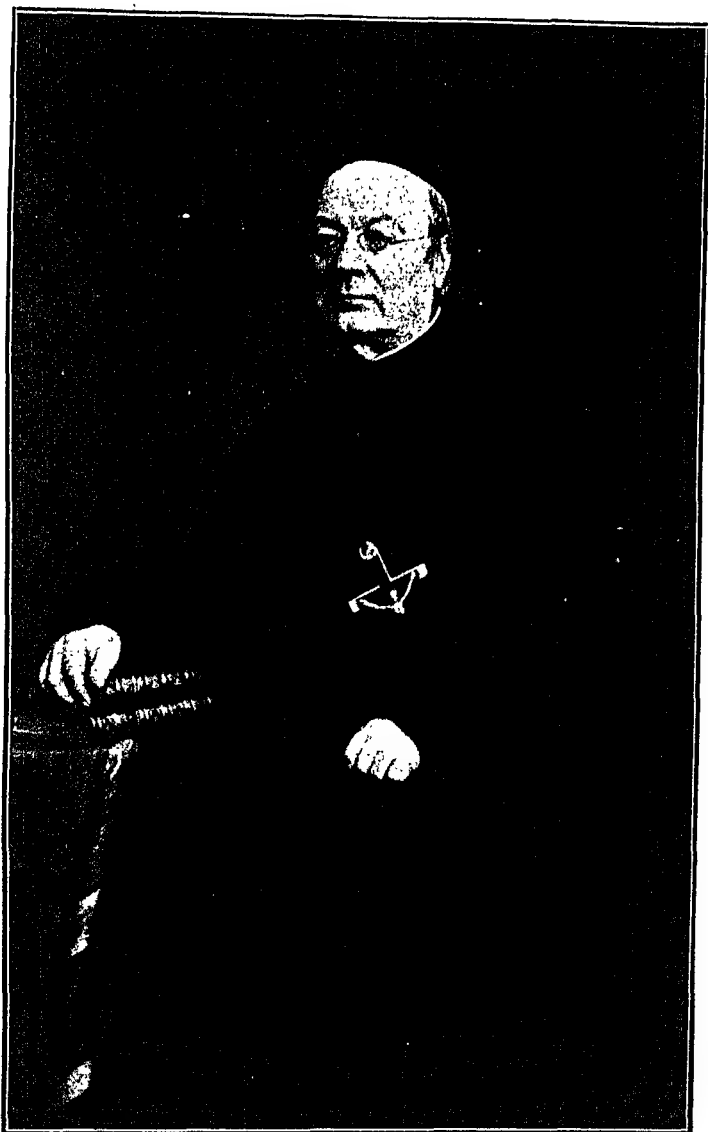
arrival of the first Oblates, Provencher had therefore the consolation of counting in his territory no less than seven priests, one scholastic who was shortly to be ordained, and one lay brother. Times were evidently changing for the better.¹⁹

In March of the following year, Father Bermond left for the ill-starred post of Duck Bay, on Lake Winnipegosis, which had been visited by Laffèche in 1845, that is, one year after the melancholy death of Mr. Darveau. He passed there two months and a half teaching and catechizing a band of Indians who did not prove too refractory to the call of grace.

About the same time Father Taché was making long and exceedingly tiresome journeys on snowshoes, first to Green Lake where he baptized a Cree chief, and then to Lake Caribou, an important body of water in the east, which had so far never been visited by the "man of God." Passing by Lake Laronge, he was grieved to see that he had been preceded by a Protestant school teacher acting as a minister.

He reached Lake Caribou, March 25, 1847, and realized how much nearer the kingdom of God the Chippewayans were than the Crees, both nations being represented on that lake. On the following June 13th, he was home again at Ile à la Crosse, and passed the summer studying the native language

¹⁹It may be worth mentioning that Father Taché's was the last trip by the long and exceedingly tedious canoe route. From 1846 on, practically all the missionaries came by way of the American prairies and St. Paul.



FATHER AUBERT,
The First Oblate within the Canadian Northwest.

with Mr. Lafèche, catechizing the Indians and preparing their church, as well as his own garden—the *bourgeois* of the place, old Mr. Roderick McKenzie, had very kindly caused a modest house to be built for his use and that of Mr. Lafèche.

Brother Faraud,²⁰ was ordained May 8th of that year, and his first mission was to Wabassimong, where he accompanied Father Aubert, the superior of the Oblates in the country. On their return to St. Boniface, Provencher abandoned that post.²¹ Numberless tribes were clamouring for the presence of the missionary in the west, and especially in the north. It was judged preferable to send priests where they could do good rather than leaving them where their services were not appreciated.

Father Aubert thenceforth remained at St. Boniface, with the venerable prelate, of whom he had become the confidant, while Father Faraud accompanied the buffalo hunters in their fall excursion.

In the north Father Taché, bent on new conquests, left in August his elder companion. He journeyed as far as Lake Athabasca where, in the course of a mission which lasted three weeks, he baptized one hundred and ninety-four persons, Chippewayans for the most part.

In this connection, the author of the little book already quoted on the death of Mr. Darveau, a book

²⁰During his journey from Montreal, which lasted three months, Brother Faraud was nearly killed by his cart, which capsized and passed over his body with its load. He was then 23 years old.

²¹Letter from Provencher, December, 1847.

which professes a holy horror for the "poisonous pastures of Popery,"²² proclaims the fact that the Romish priests baptized anyone who consented to have the rite performed on his or her person without giving any instruction, "tying a metal cross around their necks and assuring them that they were safe."²³ He lays the same accusations at the door of Mr. Darveau,²⁴ and again in connection with the two priests at Ile à la Crosse. In the case of the latter he adds that, instead of instructing the candidates for baptism, they gave them a paper containing the names of the patriarchs and apostles, representations of heaven, saints, the flood, Solomon's temple, etc. Above all, the author notices thereon a road representing the Roman Catholic religion which leads to heaven, and another marked "pretended Reformation" ending in a very different place.²⁵ He further states that "some of the Indians [apparently of Ile à la Crosse] have resisted all the solicitations of the priests," and that even some who had been baptized threw away their crosses "of their own accord,"²⁶ and begged for Protestant instruction.

The primary object of the book in question was evidently to interest the good people of England and lead them to contribute generously towards the mis-

²²"The Rainbow of the North," p. 132.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 152.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 154.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 168.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 169.

sion fund. Against this we have nothing to say. But there is even in King James' Bible an injunction from a very high Power against bearing false witness against one's neighbour. We dare say that this injunction was grossly disregarded in that publication.

First of all, it stands to reason that when a missionary passes three weeks in preaching and catechizing—another states that he never had less than one hundred persons at his daily catechisms—his people must have some kind of instruction when he finally baptizes them.²⁷ And yet from the numerous private letters of the missionaries we gather the fact that, even after such a prolonged instruction, only a few adults were admitted, most of the baptisms being of children, while the great majority of their parents were reserved for a subsequent visit.

Then, as to any Indian throwing away "of his own accord" the cross he had received at his baptism, or in any other circumstance, any one who has the least experience of the native mentality will at once stamp such an assertion as a falsehood. An Indian, be he even a heathen, will treasure such an object, and would not part with it on any consideration, least of all will he not throw it away of his own accord.

Finally, one is free to go to Ile à la Crosse and

²⁷During the entire winter, which is just over, I never had less than a hundred persons at the catechism every day" (Letter from Mr. Thibault; Edmonton, 6th May, 1846).

inspect the prosperous mission the Catholics have had there ever since the days of Laffèche and Taché. He will look in vain for a single Protestant native, and, if he cares to enquire, he will be told that there never was one in or about the place.

Much more generous and truthful is the reference to the labours of the two Ile à la Crosse missionaries by another Protestant, a disinterested witness to the result of their exertions. Sir John Richardson has the following to say in his journal:

"June 25, 1848. The day being Sunday our voyageurs went to mass at the Roman Catholic chapel, distant about a mile from the fort. This mission was established in 1846 under the charge of Monsieur Laffèche, who has been very successful in gaining the confidence of the Indians, and gathering a considerable number into a village round the church. In the course of the day I received a visit from Monsieur La Flèche and his colleague Monsieur Taschè. They are both intelligent and well-informed men, and *devoted to the task of instructing the Indians.*"²⁸
The italics are ours.

²⁸"Arctic Searching Expedition," vol. I., p. 104. As to Mr. Darveau, he happens to refer in one of his letters to the minister who was probably responsible for the charge recorded in "The Rainbow of the North." Speaking of an Indian camp he visited on his way to Red River, he says: "I could instruct them only four days for the lack of provisions which forced them to scatter in search of something to eat. Last year they had the visit of a minister who, in eight days, baptized some adults, after a short catechumenate, as you see (St. François-Xavier, 7th December, 1843), which remark hints plainly enough at the fact that his own period of instruction was longer. He does not mention any baptism as a result of his flying visit to that camp.

CHAPTER XIII.

TROUBLES AT HOME, CONSOLATIONS FROM ABROAD.

1847-1850.

While his missionaries were thus winning golden opinions from fair-minded Protestants in far-off fields, Bishop Provencher was not idle at St. Boniface. He was more than ever on the way to become the great citizen of the colony. In June, 1845, he had been appointed chairman of a Committee of Economy, formed within the Council of Assiniboia with a view "to encourage by premiums and otherwise the improvement of manufacturers and such branches of agriculture as might bear" on the same.¹ Exactly two years later, the report of that committee publicly acknowledged the colony's indebtedness to the prelate "for having ordered the model of a carding machine of simple construction from Canada."²

In 1845 he had already five schools with a very fair attendance, besides other less regular institutions, and he intended establishing two more under the good sisters he was lodging in his old episcopal "palace," pending the construction of their house for which the material was ready. He had advanced

¹Minutes of the C. As., 19th June, 1845.

²*Ibid.*, 28th June, 1847.

£50 to the contractor who, however, had used that money to buy tools and provisions while he worked for others. This sum was a dead loss to the poor prelate.

Commenced in 1846, the convent had, two years later, only four rooms inhabitable. However, God blessed the efforts of the sisters, and the best families in the colony, especially the Hudson's Bay Company *bourgeois*, without distinction of creed, soon had their children studying under their roof. When finished, the convent formed a building 100 by 40, two stories high, with a basement three feet above ground.

Side by side with this consoling progress, a storm was gradually gathering on the political horizon, in which Provencher's people were particularly concerned. From a social standpoint, Assiniboia was divided into two very distinct classes: that of the agriculturists, who were mostly English-speaking and generally Protestants, and that of the hunters and trappers, French Canadians almost to a man. The latter were either retired employees of one of the two original fur trading companies or their children, though not a few had also come directly from Lower Canada. Trapping, travelling and chasing buffalo had for them charms much superior to the cultivation of the few acres they had fenced in by their modest homes on the banks of the Red or the Assiniboine.

But since the coalition of the two rival companies

in 1821, the resulting corporation had grown more and more strict in the enforcement of the monopoly it derived from its charter. It had become a criminal offence not only to trade any fur from the Indians, but even to possess one that had not been bought from the Hudson's Bay Company at its own price.

In 1828 a Canadian called Régis Laurence having been accused of storing a few pelts in his house, a force of men was mustered who broke open his door while he was away, and seized all the furs that could be found within. Other parties, both Canadian and English, were dealt with in a like drastic manner.

Two special cases are mentioned in the records of the time which evoked even greater sympathy for the victims, and caused a correspondingly wide dissatisfaction in the colony. They were those of two French Canadians and an Italian. The former had settled on Lake Manitoba after the great inundation of 1826, and were in exceedingly poor circumstances, eking out a miserable existence by fishing. One of the two was lame, and could not have found any other means of supporting himself. The Italian was a tinsmith, and it was well known that he had no goods to exchange for peltries, though, for the lack of money among the Indians, he might once in a while receive a skin in payment of services rendered them.

The Frenchmen had committed no other crime than that of being found in company with the tinker. Yet the parties were apprehended, and their shanties burnt. The poor fishermen were not even allowed to

take their hooks and nets out of the lake, but were immediately marched to Fort Garry, where the French Canadians were confined for some time and then cautioned not to return to their former haunts. As to the Italian, he was kept in prison for some months, and then taken to York Factory, on Hudson Bay.³

It can be easily imagined that such acts of oppression were calculated to raise angry protests on the part of such liberty-loving people as the halfbreeds. To down any possible complaints and awe the freemen and their friends, a troop of five hundred soldiers were kept a short time at Red River. On their return to England, seventy pensioners came in the fall of 1846, who were a year later followed by a like number, making a corps of one hundred and forty or one hundred and fifty veterans under a Major Caldwell.

The Church, as such, took no cognizance of the vexatious measures of the Hudson's Bay Company; but some of her representatives, as individuals, could not help sympathizing with the oppressed, inasmuch as the validity of the charter which was responsible for the persecution was then, and has remained,

³Some time later, in a locality far away from Red River, and where the effects of the colony's petty politics found their way but slowly, Father Lacombe having, one day, had the audacity of presenting himself to the *bourgeois* attired in a coat to the collar of which he had unwittingly sewed strips of muskrat skin, he was greeted with indignant words by the trader, who reproached the missionary with giving bad example to his flock by setting at naught the regulations of the Company. As a result of his onslaught, Father Lacombe had to tear off his coat the obnoxious fur skin.

rather problematical. As early as 1845 Bishop Provencher noted the fact that one hundred and seventy dragoons (or the first body of soldiers) were scouring the plains and warning the hunters that henceforth their expeditions would not be tolerated. This step had for immediate result a petition of the half-breeds to the American Congress, asking for protection in their immemorial rights to hunt, and stating that they were ready to become American citizens and re-establish the Pembina settlement. In this rather precipitate action no member of the clergy had any hand. We shall presently see that the only priest who took any part in the troubles that ensued embodied most loyal sentiments in the document he prepared for the British government.

This was Mr. Belcourt, the idol of the French settlement in Red River. The English-speaking population was slower to move; but in the matter of the monopoly, the excessive import duties and cognate questions, every independent individual thought the yoke of the Company was becoming unbearable. Therefore, early in 1847, two petitions were sent to the Queen asking for redress: one in English, drawn up by an educated native Assiniboian, Mr. A. K. Isbister, and signed by five other Englishmen; the other in French, which had been prepared by Rev. A. Belcourt, and to which nine hundred and ninety-seven signatures were affixed.

The French document begged for a mitigation of the monopoly, a magistracy bench independent of the

Hudson's Bay Company and the right to dispose of the land to prospective settlers, with permission to use for a time part of the revenue thus created in order to improve the means of communication with the outer world.

Mr. Belcourt's factum ended with the following statements: "We are near the boundary line and could settle on the adjoining territory; we are even invited to take that step. But we admire the wisdom of the British constitution and wish to share in its privileges. The sincere desire which our august Sovereign has to render happy every one of her subjects is known here and farther; therefore we expect everything from her clemency."

There is no denying that the petition was couched in most moderate language. It was dated February 17, 1847. In conjunction with its English counterpart, it provoked a long correspondence between the British and Canadian governments, the Hudson's Bay Company authorities in London and America, Mr. Isbister and numberless personages, high and low, armed with memorials and documents of all sorts, for and against the objects of the petition. These various pieces were printed two years later by order of the House of Commons. They form 115 folio pages under the caption: Correspondence Relative to the Complaints of the Inhabitants of the Red River Settlement.

The structure of the mighty Company shook to its very foundations, and, in spite of evident exaggeration,

tions by interested parties, many accusations of the most damaging character were well established against it.

The immediate outcome of the agitation as far as the Church was concerned was that Mr. Belcourt had to leave the country. His recall by the Archbishop of Quebec was peremptorily demanded by the governor of the Company, Sir George Simpson, who even insinuated that, in case of non-compliance with his request, he should let the weight of his resentment fall on the entire Catholic clergy of the colony. A temporary withdrawal was deemed imperative, and Belcourt repaired to Quebec.

In this connection, the Hudson's Bay Company added even insult to injury. Mr. Belcourt did not leave Red River before he had been formally summoned to appear before the sheriff in company with Mr. Thibault, under the accusation of having peltries in his possession. Belcourt denied the charge, but the official would not take his word for it. He searched his trunk, where he could find nothing of a compromising nature. Mr. Thibault was likewise exonerated of the accusation.*

In spite of Mr. Belcourt's undoubted abilities, especially as a linguist, Bishop Provencher was of the opinion that he should elect to settle in a parish within Lower Canada.⁵ But the missionary who had originally experienced such difficulties in tearing

*Provencher to Signay, Archbishop of Quebec, 14th June, 1847.

⁵Letter to Mgr. Turgeon; St. Boniface, 10th June, 1847.

himself away from Ste. Martine was bound to return to the scene of his labours. He wrote twice to Sir George Simpson, then at Lachine,^o and on the third of March the governor, considering the services the priest had previously rendered and giving him credit for good intentions in his late interference with the affairs of the colony, magnanimously consented to ask the Archbishop of Quebec to send him back to the Red River.

But it was felt that his usefulness in that field was gone. He was permitted to return as near the settlement as possible, without actually being stationed within its boundaries. In consequence he went to Pembina, to which he soon imparted a degree of prosperity, building a church, founding a convent, and inaugurating other works which it has become unnecessary to detail, as his new post does not fall within the scope of the present work.

Yet active Belcourt had not said his last word. He was bound to be still for some time a factor in the local politics of Assiniboia, and even in the ecclesiastical circles of that country.

To begin with the latter, he had scarcely established himself in his new home, when it became noised abroad that he was to be named Bishop of Pembina. Mgr. Provencher at first treated lightly such a contingency, judging it ridiculous to found an episcopal see in a place he thought almost desert-

^o11th and 17th February, 1848.

ed and so near St. Boniface.' But a month later he had become used to the thought and believed in the accuracy of the report, as we see from a letter to his faithful correspondent in Quebec.⁸

He had himself been granted jurisdiction distinct from that which he had so far held in virtue of his connection with that ancient See, and appointed Vicar-Apostolic of the Northwest, in the course of 1844. On June 4, 1847, new bulls had further changed his title of vicar-apostolic into that of titular bishop; but these bulls did not reach him before a full year had elapsed.⁹

This appointment revived previous conflicting plans for the future of his immense territory. In

⁸To Bishop Turgeon, 14th June, 1848.

⁹To the same, 18th July, 1848.

¹⁰The greatest confusion seems to reign in published documents concerning the various steps whereby the Bishop of Juliopolis became Bishop of St. Boniface. Copying each other, for the lack of the official papers which were destroyed by the fire of 1860, the authors generally agree in stating that Mgr. Provencher was appointed vicar-apostolic in 1844 and Bishop of St. Boniface in 1847. Both assertions are erroneous, as we shall presently see. On the other hand, the résumé of the ecclesiastical history of Manitoba down to 1863, which was found in the corner-stone of Mgr. Taché's cathedral, states that "in 1849 the Vicariate-Apostolic of the Northwest was created a diocese"—another error. If we now turn to Bishop Provencher's own letters, we fail to derive therefrom much light on the matter. Writing to the Bishop of Quebec under date 20th June, 1845, he says indeed that he has just received the bulls that make him a Vicar-Apostolic of Red River; but three years later (14th June, 1848) we find him signing a letter, "Bishop of Juliopolis or of St. Boniface." Then he adds in a P.S.: "I have no more any name, and I shall take that of the cathedral. . . . If they are not pleased, I shall change again;" which remark, coupled with his tentative assumption of a title that was not his, seems to suggest that he had not himself very clear notions concerning his real standing in the hierarchy until 1852, when his coadjutor brought him from Rome his new title of Bishop of St. Boniface. There never was a Vicar-Apostolic of Red River.

the course of 1846 the eastern bishops had proposed the organization of a regular ecclesiastical province with a metropolitan within Provencher's domains. Consulted on the subject, the prelate found such a step premature, in the then almost unsettled state of the country, but had manifested the wish to have a coadjutor able to undertake the long journeys which it was beyond his own strength to make. The coadjutor must have rights to immediate succession in the event of the titular bishop's demise.

For this important position he had cast his eyes on Mr. Laffèche, who was then twenty-nine, and would have attained the canonical age for consecration before all arrangements therefor would have been over. As usual in such cases, he quoted Father Aubert's opinion in corroboration of his choice. Unfortunately for the immediate realization of his plans, Mr. Laffèche was then in very poor health. Indeed such was his condition that he could not think of travelling.

True, there was another alternative: Father Taché was a most able man, with a good education, good health and great natural abilities, but then he was so young! He had just been born, Provencher could not help exclaiming in the anguish of his soul.²⁰

However, the Vicar-Apostolic of the Northwest must have reconsidered his decision as to the inopportuneness of dividing his territory, for in July,

²⁰Provencher thought Father Aubert was not acceptable for the position, owing to his foreign birth.

1848, we see him writing to the coadjutor of Quebec: "It seems that Mr. Belcourt is to be bishop at Pembina. . . . If Father Taché were older, he would do very well, . . . but we must not think of him at present."¹¹ The venerable prelate then goes on to unfold his own plans. He says that he is writing to Cardinal Franson asking that his vicariate-apostolic be divided in three, comprising a northwestern diocese the seat of which would be at Edmonton, presided over by Mr. Thibault. A further division would result in another in the Far North, with Athabasca as headquarters. Pending a fuller organization, he proposed that this should be administered from Edmonton. He ended by saying: "A few years more, and Father Taché will have reached the canonical age. As the Oblates have the charge of these missions, it would perhaps not be bad that the bishop be an Oblate."

As we shall soon see, his original plan of a simple coadjutor without territorial division eventually prevailed. This, however, was not to be realized before Mr. Belcourt had played his last card in the political world of Red River to which we have already alluded.

The petition of 1847 in spite of the enormous commotion it had caused in the fur trading quarters and elsewhere, did not appreciably better the lot of the petitioners. Nay, the dissatisfaction of the French

¹¹To Bishop Turgeon, 18th July, 1848.

population was growing even greater, owing to the objectionable proceedings of the chief magistrate, a Mr. Adam Thom, who was an able man, but passed for yielding to violently anti-French leanings, which he was known to hold from the part he played in the east at the time of the rebellion of 1837 and after.

This creature of the Hudson's Bay Company, which gave him a salary of £700 per year, in addition to board and lodgings, not only would not have any French spoken at his bar, though the majority of the people scarcely knew any English, but he was also regarded as the real instigator of the last vexatious measures adopted by the Company, or the Council of Assiniboia, between which very little difference was seen as a rule.

In March, 1849, a halfbreed named William Sayer, who was regarded as French, though his father was an English *bourgeois* of the Northwest Company,¹² was accused of having illicitly trafficked in furs with the Indians. Hence he was arrested after a vigorous resistance, for which he suffered grievous bodily harm at the hands of the mercenaries of the Hudson's Bay Company; but he was eventually liberated on bail, with the understanding that he should stand trial at the next criminal assizes, together with the other halfbreeds charged with the same offence.

These arrests, following the agitation already described, were the spark that ignited the powder. The

¹²John Sayer, or Sayers, who was trading in the west in 1797-98.

halfbreeds made up their minds that their compatriots should not suffer for deeds they fully approved of. Yet, unwilling to do wrong, they consulted their usual adviser, Mr. Belcourt, now of Pembina. That gentleman, remembering the excesses which the Company had committed on the strength of a charter which many jurists held to be invalid, was of the opinion that if the pensioners were called to arms in order to enforce a decision based on that charter, it should be lawful to repulse force by force.¹³

Now it just happened that the halfbreeds had in their ranks a person well qualified to head them on in such an emergency. This was J. Louis Rielle (or Riel), a man thirty-two years old, born of a French-Chippewayan mother by a French father. Having passed a considerable part of his life in the east, where he had even entered the novitiate of the Oblates, he enjoyed for that reason exceptional consideration with his fellow halfbreeds.

Apprehending trouble, the Hudson's Bay Company had shrewdly fixed the trial of Sayer for May 17th, which in 1849 happened to be Ascension Day, a feast which was known to be of obligation with the Catholics. It was hoped that their religious duties would keep them at St. Boniface while Sayer would be tried.

But they managed to assist in a body at an early mass at the cathedral, and when the time of the trial

¹³Provencher to Turgeon, 27th June, 1849.

arrived, a great crowd of armed men, Canadians and halfbreeds led by Riel, surrounded the Court House. Alex. Ross asserts that 377 guns were seen in their midst,¹⁴ without counting various isolated groups armed with all sorts of missiles. The continuator of Gunn says in this connection that "they conducted themselves in the most orderly manner, merely surrounding the Court House, and by their presence showing their intentions," which were, not to interfere with the trial, but to resist the infliction of any punishment on the would-be culprits.¹⁵

When the accused was called to the bar, twelve halfbreeds escorted him who, at the request of the court, were to help him defend his cause. At the same time Riel boldly stood up and declared that the population demanded the acquittal of the accused.

"We give you one hour to reach a decision," he said, "after which he shall be considered not guilty."

"We object to a judge who cannot understand those he tries," cried out one of the twelve.

"He is at the behest of the Company, who unjustly prevents free trade, and crushes us down with too heavy import duties," added another.

"Yes, and that Company ignores us in the government of the country," complained a third.

¹⁴Bishop Provencher says, "perhaps over 200 men armed with guns." (To. Turgeon, 27th June, 1849).

¹⁵"History of Manitoba," p. 304.

"Above all, we must have free trade in furs," corrected Riel.¹⁰

What were the authorities to do in the face of the armed assemblage outside? Sayer confessed that he had traded furs with the Indians, but added that he had received permission to do so from a party connected with the Company. The court was glad to have that excuse for discharging him. They likewise liberated the three other halfbreeds even without the semblance of a trial. Whereupon someone among the twelve, who scarcely understood the nature of the proceedings, imagining that the halfbreeds' demand had been granted, cried out as he made his exit:

"*Le Commerce est libre*" (trade is free)!

"Trade is free; *vive la liberté!*" shouted hundreds of throats. And guns were discharged, hands were shaken and three cheers given in honour of the event.

Thenceforth there was no attempt made at enforcing the odious monopoly. After endeavouring to weather the storm and resist the tide against him by allowing the services of a French interpreter, Thom had to return east, the import duties were lowered from $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 5, and afterwards 4 per cent. In short, all the demands of the French population were acceded to.

¹⁰All these various demands are explicitly mentioned in the minutes of the session of the Assiniboia Council held the week following Sayer's trial.

The following year, Rev. L. Laffèche was sworn in as a member of the council (September 5, 1850), in addition to the bishop and Captain George Marcus Cary, both of whom had been admitted at the same time. On the other hand, on October 16, 1850, the halfbreeds Pascal Breland, Urbain Delorme and Joseph Guibeau were appointed magistrates for the White Horse Plains District, and François Bruneau with Maximilien Genton and three English for the Upper District.

All of which goes to demonstrate the growth of the Catholic element and of its importance in the colony of Assiniboia.

Bishop Provencher personally took no active part in these proceedings. Other cares weighed on his mind. He was now pursued by the idea that, though apparently still robust in spite of his sixty-three years, he could not live much longer. After what he knew of the delays attending the nomination of a successor to some bishops, and the evil that accrued therefrom, he was obsessed by the fear of dying without a coadjutor who could succeed him *ipso facto*, thus obviating the inconvenience of a long interregnum.

We have seen that his first thoughts had been for Mr. Laffèche. He had even called him to St. Boniface to be in a position to judge for himself of his health, and the gentleman had arrived from Ile à la Crosse shortly after the troubles just recited. He was lame from rheumatic pains and sores in the legs,

and he would not hear of the episcopate. The mission of St. François-Xavier not occasioning much travelling on the part of its incumbent, Lafèche was appointed thereto.

At St. Boniface, two young Oblates, Fathers Maisonneuve and Tissot,¹⁷ had arrived from France the preceding year (1848), and were awaiting marching orders for Ile à la Crosse, where Father Taché was doing wonders, with the help of Father Faraud. As to Father Aubert, he was recalled to Canada in the course of 1850, so that the venerable prelate felt all the more the need of someone to share the burden that was now pressing so heavily upon his shoulders.

He despaired of Mr. Lafèche. After him he had no choice: in spite of his youth, Father Taché was evidently the man for the situation. He knew the country and several languages, was able and learned, and above all he belonged to a religious Order. Once consecrated, that Order could not possibly abandon the missions over which he would preside. "This diocese must fall into the hands of the Oblates, it could not otherwise get recruits for its clergy," he wrote to Mgr. Turgeon.¹⁸

Consequently, he submitted his name to Rome, after having asked for the consent of his Superior-General,¹⁹ Mgr. de Mazenod.

¹⁷The latter only a scholastic brother when he arrived at St. Boniface.

¹⁸August 28th, 1849.

¹⁹St. Boniface, 29th Nov., 1849.

Here we cannot help admiring the designs of Providence, and the means it takes to put them into execution. The revolution of 1848 had left its traces over almost all continental Europe; but most especially in France, which, then as now, alone contributed more towards the support of foreign missions than all the other Catholic nations together. Owing to the last named events and the unsettled state of that country, it was feared that the source of French generosity must be dried up. Hence the necessity, not only of retrenchment, but also of keeping only such missions as could not possibly be abandoned.

The case of the Red River establishments and their dependencies in the north was even more hopeless. It had been represented to Mgr. de Mazenod that it was a country without a future and that it could not furnish his Oblates with work or resources. It is therefore more than likely that, had Mgr. Provencher's letter concerning the elevation of Father Taché reached the Superior-General before Rome had settled the matter, he would have refused his consent to a step which was tantamount to assuming for ever the burden of those missions.

But, for unknown reasons, that letter was kept in Montreal along with others, and it reached Marseilles only after the emission of Taché's bulls (June 24, 1850). Aged only twenty-seven, the reverend gentleman was named by the Pope Bishop of Arath *in partibus infidelium* and coadjutor to

Bishop Provencher, with right to succeed him on his demise.

Mgr. de Mazenod, in the first moment of surprise caused by the absence of the proper explanations from the Vicar-Apostolic of the Northwest, was inclined to look on the appointment in the light of a bad trick played on him. But he soon recognized the finger of God in this nomination which came in direct opposition to his own plans for the Indian missions of North America. He therefore ordered Father Taché to cross the ocean preparatory to being consecrated in France by his own father in God.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEATH OF BISHOP PROVENCHER.

1850-1853.

While these arrangements were being made for the good of the missions, the party who was the most directly concerned in their realization was continuing his apostolic labours some fifteen hundred miles north of St. Boniface without in the least dreaming of the high destinies that were being prepared for him. In 1849 the courier had brought him and his socius Father Faraud the news of the revolution in France, which, it was said, had considerably reduced the receipts of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. In consequence the superior of the two missionaries, Father Aubert, hinted that their post would probably have to be abandoned in the near future.

On hearing of this they immediately drew up and sent him the following letter, which deserves to be quoted in its entirety.

"The news contained in your communication grieves us, but we are not discouraged by it. We know that you have at heart the good of our missions, and we cannot bear the thought of abandoning our dear neophytes and our numerous catechumens. We hope that it will always be possible to

get altar bread and wine for the Holy Sacrifice. Apart from this source of consolation and strength, we ask of you only one thing: permission to go on with our missions. The fish of the lake will suffice for our subsistence and the spoils of the wild beasts for our clothing. For mercy's sake, do not recall us."

These lines speak for themselves; we would only lessen their significance by commenting on them. We must, however, remark that the prayers of the devoted missionaries were heard. They continued their good work, aided, since July, 1849, by Brother Dubé, who attended to the material concerns of the establishment of Ile à la Crosse.

It is to that same year that we must trace the founding (September 8th) of the mission of Athabasca as a permanent post. Father Faraud was its first incumbent. We have also to count among the happy events of that year the passage at Red River of a priest who was soon after to give his name to the Congregation of the Oblates. Writing to Bishop Turgeon under date November 30, 1849, Provencher has the following: "Mr. Lacombe has considerably pleased us." This must suffice for the present. That name will occur more than once in the following pages.

In the spring of 1850, Fathers Maisonneuve and Tissot replaced Father Faraud at Ile à la Crosse, and set upon learning the language with the help of Father Taché, who, since the departure of Mr.

Lafèche, had become the superior of the establishment.

On Lake Manitoba, Father Bermond was endeavouring with little enough success, to break the Sauteux for the yoke of the Gospel. His aim was to bring the late Mr. Darveau's Indians to settle about that sheet of water, instead of Lake Winnipegosis, owing to the greater facility for the missionary to attend them. But the old animus instilled in their minds was persisting, and it is said that, on one occasion, Father Bermond's life was even in danger with them.

From Ile à la Crosse Father Taché had been visiting various camps of Déné Indians and Crees in widely separated localities, when he was thunderstruck at receiving, in February, 1851, the news of his elevation to the episcopate. His bishop ordered him to St. Boniface, and his own religious superior gave him a similar command. The young priest had nothing to do but obey the summons. Arrived at St. Boniface he found a letter from Mgr. de Mazenod, who ordered him in the name of holy obedience to leave immediately for Marseilles. The Founder of the Oblates wanted to see that youthful son of his who seemed to enjoy universal esteem.

Once at the feet of the stately prelate, the young missionary thought he might still ward off the redoubtable burden proffered him. But De Mazenod had a will of his own.

"You shall be a bishop," he declared.



RT. REV. CHARLES J. E. DE MAZENOD,

Bishop of Marseilles.

Founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

"But, my Lord, my age, my shortcomings, such and such a reason."

"The Holy Father has appointed you, and when the Pope speaks, it is God that speaks."

"Yet, my Lord, I want to remain an Oblate."

"It is quite so that I understand it."

"But episcopal dignity seems incompatible with religious life."

"What! the fullness of the priesthood excludes that perfection to which a religious must aspire!"

Then drawing himself up with the noble dignity which characterized him, De Mazenod added:

"Nobody is more a bishop than I am, and surely nobody is more of an Oblate either."

Taché was consecrated November 23, 1851, at Viviers, in the southeast of France. Then he was named Vicar of the Oblate Missions in Northwestern America.¹ He soon after repaired to Rome, where he obtained that the meaningless title of Vicar-Apostolic of the Northwest be changed into that of Bishop of St. Boniface.

In his zeal for the propagation of the Catholic faith the titular of that new See had asked from a very different power—the Hudson's Bay Company's authorities—permission to establish a permanent mission at York Factory for the benefit of the employees of his communion and the Indians

¹A Vicar of Missions, in the Oblate Order, is a superior of several missionary posts, the same as a Provincial for a regularly constituted Province, where the houses have generally more subjects and are more fully organized.

who might feel like seeking admission therein. And as he knew of the hostility of some high personages to such a step, Provencher had deemed it advisable to keep in the background, and let the Coadjutor of Quebec, and the Bishops of Montreal, Martyropolis and Bytown (Ottawa) transmit themselves his request.

Nevertheless that permission was refused on the pretext that "the collision of hostile creeds, which could not fail to result from the adoption of such a measure, would be injurious both to the spiritual and temporal interests of the natives."²

Nothing daunted by this rebuke, the same prelates made a new attempt in January of the following year. They regretted the hostility to their denomination which such a refusal implied; they grieved at the reasons on which it was based, considering that their missionaries had ever acted for the best interests of the people without distinction of creed, instead of causing collisions that would militate against their usefulness.

They ended their memorial thus: "It is useless to remind your Committee of the powerful motives which your honourable Company has to use its charter with such moderation that it may not result in complaints against the immense privileges which it enjoys."

This indirect thrust at the much debated charter was too much for the fur magnates. Their second

²A. Barclay, Secretary Hudson's Bay Company, London, 24th Aug., 1850.

reply was even more discouraging than the first. They wrote to the bishops:

"The Committee are persuaded that if you reconsider the words alluded to, you will see that it is the hostility of creeds, not of the professors of those creeds, from which they are anxious to protect the natives of their territories. For this and other reasons, preparations have been made, by the endowment of the bishopric of Rupert's Land, for a greater extension throughout the country of the missionary system adopted by the Church of England, to which it is their intention to give all the support in their power. Nor have they any fear that they will either suffer in public opinion or endanger their charter by preferring Protestant to Roman Catholic missionaries as instructors for the native population."⁷³

After such an open admission of partiality, nothing was left to be hoped for by the Catholic hierarchy from that quarter and the matter had to be dropped.

Unable to do anything for the Catholics of York Factory, Provencher turned his attention to a nearer post. In the course of 1850, the halfbreeds of St. François-Xavier received two Grey nuns, Sisters Lagrave and Lafrance, who immediately established a school for the children of the locality.

The home authorities of the Company and even Protestant clergymen in Red River, who were in a

*A. Barclay, London, 14th Feb., 1851, to the same.

better position to appreciate the services of the Catholic priests, were more accommodating. On May 1, 1851, Rev. Mr. William Cochrane⁴ moved, and Mr. Lafèche seconded, in the colonial council, "that £100 be granted from the public funds to be divided annually between the Bishop of Rupert's Land and the Bishop of the Northwest, to be applied by them at their discretion for the purposes of education." That motion was carried unanimously.

In the following year, Mr. Lafèche seconded a proposal by Dr. Bunn of the same council, to the effect that fifteen pounds should be granted for educational purposes to Reverend John Black, the new Presbyterian minister in the settlement. This motion likewise met with unanimous approval.⁵

And yet, in common with the preceding, it was disallowed by the London Committee "as being a misapplication of the public fund!"⁶ Bigotry and narrow-mindedness do not date from yesterday. The repartition of some of the monies contributed by the public with a view to helping its schools a misapplication of the public fund! And this at a time when all the schools in the colony were under the auspices of some church and Provencher's teachers had just opened classes for English-speaking pupils!⁷ Yet there are some who will continue to

⁴Whose name is often spelt Cockran in contemporaneous literature. Mr. (afterwards Archdeacon) Cochrane was, according to Dr. Bryce ("History of the Hudson's Bay Company," p. 299), "a man of gigantic form and of amazing bonhomie."

⁵Minutes of the Council, 13th July, 1852.

⁶*Ibid.*, 25th March, 1853.

⁷Provencher to Archbishop of Quebec, 21st July, 1851.

proclaim that it is the Catholic Church which is opposed to instruction!

But others than the Bishop of St. Boniface had their troubles. We have seen Mr. Lafèche stationed at St. François-Xavier. Notwithstanding the unsatisfactory state of his health, he accompanied his halfbreed flock over the prairies in quest of buffalo. The Sioux were growing more and more hostile, and disliked the halfbreeds on account of the Sautaux or Cree blood that flowed in their veins. Yet, as a result of their Christian training, the latter more than once did them a good turn. It might be well for us to accompany Mr. Lafèche in one or two of these expeditions. We will find here cause for being thankful to the civilizing effects of religion in the same proportion as we are shocked at the atrocities we will see perpetrated by those who would not hear of it. This little excursion to the southwest of Red River will initiate us into the dangers inherent to the priestly office on the plains.

Mr. Lafèche's first experience there took place in 1849. One day two Sioux tumbled unawares into his camp, which contained several Sautaux Indians. As soon as they were identified, the missionary and his halfbreeds had to cover them with their own bodies to protect them against the Sautaux bullets and arrows. Six full miles had they to escort them before their traditional enemies desisted from their endeavours to do away with them.

Some time later (on August 4, 1849), over one

hundred Sautaux left for the Fort des Prairies, who on the morrow suddenly found themselves face to face with seven Indians who seemed to be Sioux. It was useless to think of flight; the latter therefore put up a bold front and advanced to greet the Sautaux as if they were friends.

"Sioux! Sioux! Let us kill them!" exclaimed some Sautaux.

To prevent a possible mistake their chief questions the strangers in his own dialect, to which the strayed Sioux cannot answer without betraying their identity. Pressed for a reply, one of them hazards a few words in Sautaux which, by his foreign accent, lead to the immediate destruction of himself and friends. Five of the Sioux are riddled with bullets, two attempt to flee, one of whom falls dead a short distance away, while the other rends the air with his shrieks as he is slashed and carved alive with the Sautaux daggers. He is immediately scalped while still full of life, his limbs cut off one after the other, and everyone eagerly seeks for possession of some part of his body to take home as a trophy.

But a more stirring experience was in store for Mr. Lafèche and his people. In the evening of July 7, 1850, his party was reaching a place called Grand Coteau, where they intended to camp for the morrow, which was a Sunday, when the scout signalled the presence of a very large Indian camp some distance off. The halfbreeds were only about eighty,

some of whom had not seen more than twelve or fifteen summers. To ascertain the nationality of the strangers, five scouts imprudently advanced too near, and three of them were captured while the others galloped back to their own friends.

"The Sioux," they cried, "an immense number of Sioux!"

It was afterwards ascertained that there must have been almost two thousand warriors in the horde as the number of their lodges was fully six hundred.

Therefore the anxiety of the little halfbreed party may well be imagined. Immediate preparations are made for a struggle. A stockade is formed with the carts, under which holes are dug for the women and children to hide in, and without the resulting circle breastworks are hurriedly thrown up to protect the besieged.

In spite of this, the enemy numbering at least twenty to one, there was, humanly speaking, no chance of salvation for the halfbreeds should a resolute assault be made by the Sioux. On the morrow these are seen to move forward, a mass of perhaps seven thousand men, women and children. They are so sure of the issue of the battle, should this be accepted, that the women drive horses harnessed to travails^s on which they are to carry off the booty.

The die is cast; a struggle, a terrible struggle cannot be avoided. Hence the priest goes among his

^sTwo poles lashed at one end to each side of a horse, the other ends trailing on the ground, and connected by a hurdle destined to receive a load.

people; speaks to them of God who can protect them if they implore His help, and to cheer them on to resistance, he tells them of the known cowardice of all Indians when in presence of a resolute foe. And then, as no bravery can avail against such numbers, he vows in the name of the camp to observe a solemn fast and to sing three high masses if they should escape.

In spite of all efforts to stop them by friendly remonstrances, the Sioux continue their advance. Several are now within gunshot range. One especially bold precedes all others and wants evidently to win the honour of having first penetrated into the halfbreed camp. Vainly is he warned not to advance any nearer; he is bound to rush at the doomed circle. A bullet lays him low, and Lafèche recognizes in him one of the two Sioux whose lives he has saved.

His people now swear to avenge his death. They precipitate themselves in the direction of the halfbreeds while discharging their arms; but they soon recoil before the deadly and better directed fire of Lafèche's people. They then spread out and surround at a distance the improvised fort of carts and earthen breastworks. Will the besieged withstand long their furious attack? It is now a veritable hail of bullets and arrows that rain down on the wooden bulwark and the heaps of earth. The halfbreeds are excellent shots; they spare their ammunition and strive to make every bullet find a victim.

To the horrible war songs, the hideous yells and war whoops of the Sioux chiefs the halfbreeds answer with deafening hurrahs whenever they have evidence that their own missiles are well directed. Vainly does the enemy attempt to storm them; a deadly volley issues from the camp, whose defenders realize perfectly well that if the enemy comes too near they are doomed.

Even the missionary seems under the effect of the smell of powder. "I had not deemed it proper to shoulder a musket on account of my character," he wrote afterwards; "but I was determined that, at the supreme moment, I would raise my axe on the head of the first rascal that would dare touch my cart."⁹

Fortunately that supreme moment did not come. After six hours of a terrible fusillade, the Sioux began to lose heart. In the midst of the fight they were clearly heard to say:

"You have with you a Manitou that protects you."

So they desisted and gradually retired with their dead and wounded, carrying them off in the vehicles which they had intended for the rich booty of which they felt so sure.

The halfbreeds had only three men slightly wounded, in addition to one of the imprudent scouts, who was found pierced with sixty-seven arrows and

⁹Mr. Lafèche to a friend, St. François-Xavier, 4th Sept., 1851.

three bullets.¹⁰ His feet and hands had been cut off and taken away, while the rest of the body was horribly mutilated. But in that battle and another affray that followed as the halfbreeds were retiring to a large camp of their own people, the Sioux had no less than eighteen wounded and fifteen killed—others asserted later on that the latter figure should be fifty.

More pacific were the associations of Taché, the young Bishop of Arath, and less stirring the scenes that greeted him all over France and Italy. But his new dignity was only an inducement to a prompt return to the wilds of Northern America, as it meant work that others could not do. Moreover he had promised the fathers of Ile à la Crosse to be again with them in September, 1852.

He bade farewell in February to his venerable father in God, Bishop de Mazenod, and, after a long voyage through the American plains, which was perforce very devious on account of the Sioux who had become veritable pests, he reached St. Boniface, June 27, 1852. With him were an Oblate father, Henri Grollier, who was to become the great missionary of the Arctic Circle, and a young secular priest of whom we have already got a glimpse. This was Rev. Albert Lacombe who, after some time passed at Pembina with Mr. Belcourt, was now coming to consecrate his whole life to the service of the poor Indians under the ægis of Mary Immaculate.

¹⁰The two others who had been made prisoners had succeeded in effecting their escape.

His intention was to enter immediately the novitiate of the Oblates; but conquered by the entreaties of Monseigneur Provencher, who had nobody to put at Edmonton in the place of Mr. Thibault who wanted to leave the country, he finally agreed to postpone that step and accede to the poor prelate's wishes. Abandoning that post might have had disastrous consequences.

Meantime Thibault having consented to remain some time longer, he found in a different work an honourable retreat at St. François-Xavier, which Mr. Lafèche then left to remain with the bishop at St. Boniface.

The bishop and priest witnessed another terrible inundation, which caused all the more damage as the population was now getting denser. The whole country was temporarily transformed into a lake which, at Provencher's very door, was five feet deep. Day and night he could hear the waves beating against the stone walls of his home, as does the surf against the cliffs of the sea coast.¹¹

But having arrived long after the water had subsided, the new missionaries were spared the sight of the disaster. On the 8th of July,¹² Fathers Lacombe

¹¹Provencher to the Archbishop of Quebec, 6th July, 1852.

¹²There are several discrepancies in the dates of these various events in the printed documents. Thus, Bishop Taché says in his *Vingt Années de Missions* that he returned to St. Boniface on June 27th, while Abbé G. Dugas (*Monseigneur Provencher*, p. 275) makes that date the 4th July, which is evidently a mistake. On the other hand, the author of *Vingt Années de Missions* commits a *lapsus memoriae* in changing the 8th, the date of his departure, into the 10th.

and Grollier knelt at the feet of the venerable prelate, Mgr. Taché insisting on imitating them in spite of his new rank. This was the final parting of the first two Bishops of St. Boniface, who were to meet again only in heaven.

In the night of September 10th-11th, Mgr. Taché arrived at Ile à la Crosse with Father Grollier. His presence was badly needed there. We already know the fickleness of the aborigine, which is especially characteristic of the Déné race. In addition to this, the Chippewayans of Ile à la Crosse had been displeased at the successive departure of Taché, Lafèche and Faraud just when their knowledge of the language rendered their services more valuable. Two young priests who, of course, did not at first know a word of Chippewyan and had but common ability for acquiring it had taken their place, and their ignorance of the native dialect had rendered their ministry quite difficult. Hence discontent, murmurs against the frequent changes of pastors and consequent neglect of Christian duties on the part of the neophytes. Fortunately Bishop Taché's presence was soon to remedy everything.

As the young prelate was returning from Europe, Father Faraud, alone at Lake Athabasca, was dreaming of new conquests. He went down to Great Slave Lake, whither he was the first missionary to take the Glad Tidings. He was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and his preaching did a vast amount of good.

On his return to his Mission of the Nativity (Athabasca), he had the consolation of welcoming a fellow labourer in the person of Father Grollier, while at St. Boniface three other missionaries, Fathers Rémas and Végreville, accompanied by Brother Alexis Raynard were swelling the ranks of the Oblates who, by the end of 1852, counted eight priests and two lay brothers in the diocese of St. Boniface.

As to the head of that diocese, without being actually sick, he had constant presentiments that his end was approaching. The three great desires of his heart were now accomplished. He had religious, whose presence in the ranks of his clergy meant the perpetuation of the missions; he had nuns who watched over the education of the young, and finally a coadjutor with right to future succession rendered his mind easy concerning the eventuality of an early demise.

A fourth desideratum had lately taken possession of his thoughts. The priest who usually stayed with him at St. Boniface had so far had the direction of his college. But all were not equally qualified for that work, and he would have liked to obtain therefor the services of teaching brothers. His attention was called to the Brothers of St. Viateur, already established in Lower Canada. He endeavoured to have some of them come up to him; but after the losses caused by the inundation of 1852, his purse was in no position to meet the expenses consequent

on such an establishment. As death was already at his door he could not follow up that plan.

In the morning of May 19, 1853, he was getting up when he was suddenly prostrated by a stroke of apoplexy which left him unconscious on the floor of his room. This was on a Saturday. After regaining consciousness he could scarcely speak, and the following night he passed in sleeplessness. Yet he insisted on assisting at mass and saying his office, which his attendants, Mr. Lafèche and Father Bermond, had ultimately to allow him to recite, after they had concealed his breviary owing to his weak state.

He was half delirious most of that week, and received the last sacraments on the 24th. Later in the evening of June 7th, after having blessed his people, his absent priests and the sisters, he quietly breathed his last. Two days afterwards, a solemn requiem mass was sung in the sisters' chapel, and on the tenth his body was taken to the cathedral, where the final service was held in presence of Major Caldwell, Governor of Assiniboia, the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company present at Fort Garry and a large number of Protestants, in addition to the Catholics of St. Boniface and vicinity.

Useless to expatiate on the merits of the first Bishop of St. Boniface. He is judged by his works, and we now have some knowledge of them. He belonged to the old school of strict ecclesiastics, who knew no compromise when it was a question of

duty. He was noted for his devotedness to his flock, his good sense, an unaffected piety, and a great kindness of heart.¹³

"In proof of this last quality, we chose the following trait of his life: He had once killed a pig, which was left over night hanging under a shed. It might have been midnight when he was told by his servant that somebody was running away with it. Provencher was a powerful man, six feet four, and he soon overtook the fugitive with his appropriated load:

"Don't take it all away, it is all I have to eat," expostulated the bishop.

"So it is with me," said the thief; "my children have not eaten anything for the last two days."

"Well, that is not a reason for stealing. Take it back to the shed, and I will give you half of it, so that both of us will have something to eat."

Which was immediately done, and both were pleased, the one for having kept half of his animal, the other for having acquired the other half. (Geo. Dugas, *Monseigneur Provencher*, pp. 298, 299).

CHAPTER XV.

BISHOP TACHE SUCCEEDS BISHOP PROVENCHER.

1853-1856.

Bishop Taché was barely thirty years of age when, by the death of Monseigneur Provencher, he exchanged his distant See of Arath for that of St. Boniface. Except in official parchments, the former was a thing of the past, and, considered as a city, the latter had as yet but a future existence. St. Boniface then consisted merely of the cathedral and adjoining Bishop's House, a convent inhabited by eleven sisters, some of whom were taking care of the sick who lodged with them; one or two houses, where dwelt or were soon to dwell, Messrs. Narcisse Marion and Amable Thibault, a brother to the veteran missionary of the same name, together with a few cabins along the Seine River. All the other parishioners, to the number of about eleven hundred souls, were scattered on their farms or more or less cultivated plots of land on the banks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers.

Besides the parish of St. Boniface, there was that of St. François-Xavier, on the White Horse Plain, which boasted a log church 80 by 33, and a convent with two nuns for a population of almost nine hundred. This post was situated some eighteen miles

from St. Boniface. Between these two points was the nucleus of a new parish that was to be founded the following year by the building of a presbytery. This was St. Charles, then known as Sturgeon River, which might have had slightly less than two hundred inhabitants. The elements of a fourth parish were along the Red River, nine miles along its confluence with the Assiniboine. The place went by the name of Sale (or Dirty) River, and in 1854 the materials for a church and priest's house were first prepared, which in course of time were to give place to the present edifice at St. Norbert. That circumscription had about nine hundred of a population.

St. Charles was attended from St. François-Xavier, and one of the priests at St. Boniface usually visited St. Norbert.

The Indian missions with resident priests then in existence were Ste. Anne, forty-five miles west of Edmonton; St. John the Baptist, at Ile à la Crosse, and the Nativity, on Lake Athabasca, each of which had a number of dependencies or outposts regularly visited by the incumbents of the missions.

The relative importance of these missionary stations, as well as their Catholic population, may be gauged in a way by the approximate number of baptisms administered in a year. There was about one hundred and twenty for St. Boniface; sixty for St. François-Xavier; from seventy-five to eighty for Ile à la Crosse and seventy for Lake Athabasca. On the first of January, 1854, the total number of baptisms

to the credit of the Indian missions, apart* from St. Boniface and St. François-Xavier, was 4,309.

As to the clergy for these various stations and dependencies, it consisted of four secular priests: Messrs. Thibault, on Red River; Bourassa, at St. François-Xavier; Laffèche, at St. Boniface, and Lacombe, at Ste. Anne. To these were now added seven Oblate fathers, namely: Bermond, at St. Boniface; Faraud and Grollier, at Lake Athabasca; Tissot and Maisonneuve, at Ile à la Crosse; Végreville and Rémas, just arrived.

Father Maisonneuve having fallen sick had to be sent back to headquarters at St. Boniface; but his companion Father Tissot was very active and preached in the fall of 1853, a one month mission to the Crees of Green Lake, with results which might have been more satisfactory, though the missionary did not complain of the attendance at the religious exercises.

As to Bishop Taché he was not to leave the north, and especially Ile à la Crosse, for his new See before he had consolidated the good work already commenced. The very night he had heard of the demise of Mgr. Provencher, after having dispatched letters of vicar-general to Father Bermond, to whom he gave full power to administer the property of the Church in Red River, he set out with Brother Alexis for Lake Athabasca. Arrived at the Mission of the Nativity, he commissioned Father Grollier to go and establish a post at the eastern extremity of the lake.

This was the origin of the Mission of Our Lady of Seven Dolours. It was founded for a tribe of Indians known as Caribou-Eaters.

In August Father Rémas left Red River for forts Cumberland, Carlton and Pitt, whence he proceeded to Lac Labiche, which had been periodically visited between 1844 and 1852. Father Rémas may be considered the first permanent priest of that place, which is situated west of Ile à la Crosse, that is, near the point of intersection of the one hundred and twelfth degree of longitude and fifty-fifth degree of latitude. Most of its inhabitants were then half-breeds, together with Crees and Dénés.

But Bishop Taché was bent on visiting and organizing all his posts before he returned to St. Boniface. On February 27, 1854, he left his episcopal "palace" at Ile à la Crosse for a round of visitations which was to last upwards of three months. In this connection he has playfully described said palace thus: "It is twenty feet by twenty, and seven feet high, and smeared over with mud. This mud is not impermeable, so that rain, wind and other atmospheric elements have free access thereto. Two window sashes comprising six panes light the main apartment; two pieces of parchment serve for the remainder of the lighting system. In this palace, where everything seems small, everything is on the contrary stamped with a character of greatness. For instance my secretary is a bishop; my chamberlain is a bishop, and at times even my cook is a bishop.

These illustrious employees have all numerous defects; nevertheless their attachment to my person renders them dear to me. When they seem tired of their respective offices, I give them all an outing, and joining myself to them, I strive to divert them from their cares."¹

That journey of inspection led the young prelate first to Fort Pitt, where he was a sorrowful witness to the ravages of intoxicating liquors among the Indians, and thence to Fort Edmonton, which had been placed under the vocable of St. Joachim. There he met Mr. Lacombe and confirmed seventeen persons (March 25th). Two days later he went out by dog train to Ste. Anne's Mission, where Father Rémas awaited him. Mr. Lacombe having heard of his pitiful situation at Lac la Biche, had snatched him away from there in time to receive his bishop. By the description of Mgr. Taché's palace, we may form an idea of what that poor father's abode may have been.

The bishop's visit to Ste. Anne's was marked by the baptism, on Holy Saturday, of twenty-two adults and the confirming of ninety-eight persons, who had but lately renounced heresy or paganism.

Thence Father Rémas accompanied His Lordship to his rudiment of a mission by the shore of Lac la Biche. May 1st, steps were taken with a view to remedying to some extent the indescribable wretch-

¹*Vingt Années de Missions*, pp. 59, 60.



RT. REV. A. TACHÉ, O.M.I.
Bishop of St. Boniface.

edness which had fallen to the lot of the pious incumbent of the new post.

Two weeks later, Bishop Taché was entering again his famous palace at Ile à la Crosse. Then Father Tissot gave a successful mission at Methy Portage, while Father Végreville, who had already acquired some knowledge of the Chippewayan language, was making his first campaign at Cold Lake.

Bishop Taché had been writing to his beloved father, Mgr. de Mazenod, pressing letters asking for more evangelical labourers. In answer to these requests, a young priest, tall and dignified, though of modest deportment, was in August being welcomed at St. Boniface by his brother Oblates, Fathers Bermond and Maisonneuve (who was still on the sick list). This was Vital J. Grandin,² a priest who had been rejected by the Seminary of Foreign Missions, as unfitted for missionary work by his weak constitution, and who was to yield some forty-eight years of the most meritorious and fruitful labours in North America.

With him came three brothers of the Christian schools. Their advent had been made possible by the generosity of Mgr. Bourget, Bishop of Montreal,

²Vital Julien Grandin was born at St. Pierre-sur-Orthe, diocese of Laval, France, on the 8th of Feb., 1829. After studying at the Lesser Seminary of Précigné, he entered (21st Sept., 1851) the Seminary of Foreign Missions at Paris, which he soon had to leave on account of bad health. He then entered the novitiate of the Oblates, 28th Dec., 1851, and was admitted into their Congregation by his final vows, which he pronounced on the 1st of Jan., 1853. April 24th of the following year he was elevated to the priesthood by Bishop de Mazenod.

who had caused a collection to be made in his diocese, which netted a sum of £364. For the lack of special quarters, the brothers were at first lodged in the bishop's residence.

Taché had not as yet taken formal possession of his See of St. Boniface. As this step could not be postponed any longer, he left Ile à la Crosse, September 26th; and on the following 3rd of November he was kneeling in his cathedral "to offer up to the Lord," as he said, "his desire to serve Him and pray that that desire might be made efficient."

Ten days later (November 13, 1854), Mr. Lafèche left for Canada "with the express understanding that he should come back the following spring."² Bishop Taché deplored the abandonment of the mission of martyred Darveau, which had resulted in many of the converts passing out to Protestantism. With a view to resuming it, he had requested Mr. Lafèche to do all he could to bring two priests from Canada. In this, however, Lafèche was unsuccessful.

During his absence was commenced, in the last days of May, 1855, the construction of the college building, which measured 60 by 34, and, three years later, sheltered fifty-eight pupils. Then as the cost of travelling and forwarding the annual outfit of the missions of Lake Athabasca was exceedingly great, it was decided that the establishment of Lac la Biche should be put on such a footing that, not only that

²Letter from Taché to the Archbishop of Quebec, 13th Nov., 1854.

post and the projected missions might profit by the local resources, but that a system of transportation thence to the north should be organized with a view to curtailing expenses and ensuring some measure of independence from the Hudson's Bay Company.

Fathers Tissot and Maisonneuve were entrusted with the organization and development of that establishment, while Father Rémas would take charge of Lake Ste. Anne and become at the same time master of novices to Father Lacombe. And as it was evident that new stations should in the near future be founded on the Mackenzie and Peace Rivers, Father Grandin left St. Boniface for Athabasca, where he should at first watch over the mission while Father Faraud would explore the country.

He therefore bade farewell to Red River in the beginning of June in the company of Bishop Taché, who was returning to Ile à la Crosse. Brother Bowes, a new arrival, was also a member of the little party, but stayed over at Ile à la Crosse till he had put the last touches to the church of that place.

Meanwhile Father Lacombe had visited the neophytes of Lesser Slave Lake and Peace River. On his return to Ste. Anne's, he commenced (September 23, 1855), a novitiate in the course of which fervour and good-will had to replace to a certain extent the execution of certain canonical prescriptions incompatible with the situation of both master and disciple.

At St. Boniface, Father Bermond had seen with pleasure the return of Mr. Lafèche by the end of May, 1855. On the following 19th of October, he welcomed a precious recruit in the person of Father Jean-Marie J. Lestanc, whose arrival brought up to ten the number of professed Oblates within the diocese of St. Boniface. On the other hand, that of the secular priests had been reduced to two, Messrs. Lafèche and Bourassa, by the temporary departure of Mr. Thibault for Canada, after the return of Mr. Lafèche. By the end of 1856 only one, Rev. Mr. Thibault, remained in the diocese, both Lafèche and Bourassa having withdrawn for ever from the country where they had laboured for the last twelve years. They both left on June 1, 1856.

Thenceforth the episcopal palace at St. Boniface became practically a house for the Oblates who, for many a long year, ministered to the religious wants of the parish and neighbouring outposts. This was a sort of retreat which, for dangers, sufferings and privations of all sorts, could not bear comparison with any of the northern missions.

The presence of Father Grandin at the Nativity permitted of multiplying those stations. Farther north, seemed then the order of the day. In consequence, Father Faraud left, April 11, 1856, Lake Athabasca for Great Slave Lake. Even at that relatively late date in the season, winter was still in full sway in those high latitudes, and the trip was made on snowshoes and by dog train.

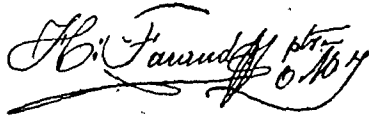
Arrived at Great Slave Lake the missionary stopped in front of Fort Resolution, the Hudson's Bay Company's trading house, where a difficulty of a delicate nature awaited him. We have already seen that the authorities of that corporation were not all favourably disposed towards the Catholic missions. Many of the local officers were not only courteous but generous to the priests, admitting them to board and lodging as if they had belonged to their own denominations. But the officer in charge of the immense Mackenzie District, which comprised Great Slave Lake, G. A. Anderson, had declared that he would admit no Catholic priest within his domains, and he gave orders to his subordinate officers never to receive them under their roofs. Hence the embarrassment of the commander at Fort Resolution at the sight of Father Faraud.

Yet in those inhospitable regions, where the native population was nomadic, that is, without a single house, and the few traders were the only whites, it would have been inhuman to refuse at least a shelter to a representative of their race especially in the winter time, when the thermometer generally hovers between 20 and 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

When he heard of the ukase of the northern potentate, Bishop Taché applied to his superior, Sir George Simpson, who at first affected to make light of the young prelate's representations. But Taché insisted in such a way that the "Emperor of British North America," as Simpson was sometimes called,

saw his mistake, and at the same time realized that he was now treating with a master mind, who must not be trifled with. He readily granted the bishop's request, and replaced Anderson's prohibitive directions by "a letter of recommendation for the clerk in charge of the post, enjoining him to treat the missionary with kindness and second him in the establishing of the mission."⁴

This explains how it is that Father Faraud felt much more at ease than the *bourgeois* of Fort Resolution when they first met. An exhibition of the governor's orders had soon broken the ice, inasmuch as, personally, the local man had no animosity against the Catholic missionaries.



FATHER FARAUD'S SIGNATURE.

Father Faraud, in addition to his aptitudes for the acquirements of languages, had no small abilities as a carpenter. He had himself put up his establishment at the Nativity; he repeated his exploit on Moose Island, Great Slave Lake, which he chose for the site of his new mission. This he dedicated to St. Joseph. The place was now ready for the future apostles whom obedience would lead to that far-off station. After a sojourn of three months, during

⁴Taché to De Mazenod, 9th Feb., 1855.

which the souls of the native population were far from neglected, the carpenter priest returned to young Father Grandin. In spite of his inexperience, the new missionary had fully maintained the Mission of Nativity up to its usual standard of efficiency.

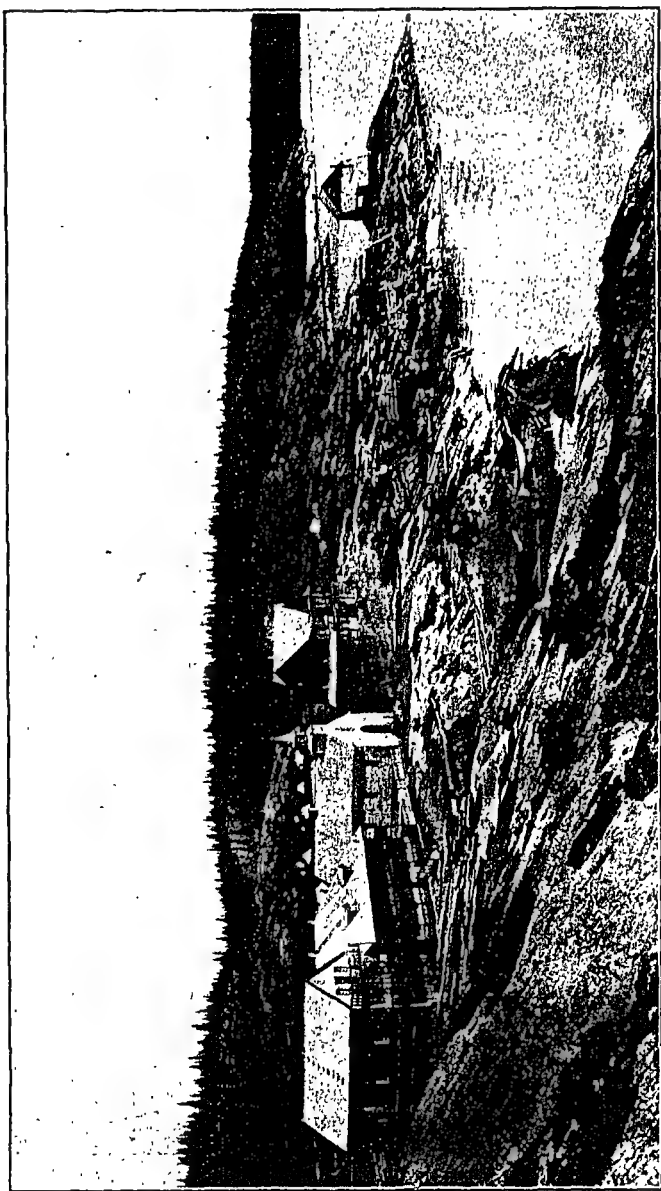
Less satisfactory was the position of Fathers Maisonneuve and Tissot at Lac la Biche. It became evident that the site of their mission had been ill-chosen. Hence during the winter of 1855-56, it was moved about six miles from the fort that stood on that lake. But this very circumstance, which was meant to improve their position, momentarily made things worse for the good fathers, who were now without a roof in the middle of winter. To console and buoy them up, Bishop Taché visited them, and shared for a few days their excessive privations. While living in a tent pitched on the snow, they had hurriedly put up a cabin to receive their superior. When Taché arrived they did not even possess a chair; a wooden block served as an episcopal seat.

But this great poverty was nothing to the good bishop in comparison to the sorrow with which he contemplated the emaciated faces of his two missionaries, which he soon perceived was the result of sheer lack of nourishment and other privations.

Their penury did not long stand in the way of the material improvements that had been projected for their establishment. With a courage that cannot be too much admired, both missionaries, after the de-

parture of their first pastor, gave themselves up to the task of clearing large patches of land, which were soon under cultivation. They also erected the many buildings necessary to a place that was intended as the great emporium of the northern missions. They even opened (1856) a cart road through the thick forest which surrounded their lake, and, in September, Father Maisonneuve astonished the good people of Fort Pitt by paying them his annual visit after having driven all the way from Lac la Biche. This road was the first work of its kind in the whole north, and it became an incentive to other parties to undertake similar conveniences of civilization.

From Lac la Biche Bishop Taché made for Lake Athabasca, which he reached on the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin. The Indians who frequented that mission received him in a body, together with a few who had come from Fond du Lac or Mission of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours. Taché had been their very first missionary; they were now as delighted as Fathers Grollier and Grandin to see him with the rank of a "Great Prayer Man." Soon Father Faraud arrived who, by the good news he brought concerning the north, put everybody in good spirits. After the regular mission exercises, a week was spent in working for the Indians. By day they were instructed, and the nights were devoted to the preparation for the



PRESENT MISSION BUILDINGS AT FORT CHIPPEWAYAN, L. ATHABASCA.



printer of some books already composed in their language.

These poor people were so much nearer the kingdom of God as they had remained simple and uncontaminated by contact with depraved whites. Simple they were indeed, and in after years Father Faraud delighted in recalling the fright that had possessed an improvised sexton of his, when he happened to ring a bell the priest had hung during the Indian's absence. The latter no sooner heard it answer to his pull than he ran off as if thunderstruck. Another Déné had been some time with the missionary, who commissioned him to impart to the people of his distant tribe the instruction he had received at the mission. Soon, however, he was back again, begging for Father Faraud's cap.

"People will not believe me," he said; "but when they see me with your own cap, they will realize that I cannot possibly be deceiving them."

Others had deemed it excellent policy to shave the crown of their head in imitation of the priestly tonsure.

"Surely I must be approaching perfection when I do what the priest does," they naively reasoned.

On the 22nd of August the bishop was again welcomed at St. Boniface by Father Bermond, who was glad to introduce to him the latest recruit from France, Father Lestanc. Another addition to the ranks of the Oblates the following winter delighted their vicar of missions. This was not a newcomer;

yet everyone was pleased to hear that he had a new brother in the person of Father Lacombe, O.M.I., who pronounced his vows in September, 1856.

In the course of his episcopal visitation Mgr. Taché had taken the census of the population of Ile à la Crosse. As it was fairly representative of that found in the other missions with resident priests, we herewith reproduce it. It will at the same time illustrate the practical results of the missionaries' efforts, and silence such as might be tempted to belittle their labours.

	Christians.	Catechumens.	Heathens.	Souls.
Chippewayans	350	22	47	419
Crees	100	30	about 100	230
Halfbreeds	78	1	1	80
French-Canadians	6	0	0	6
	<hr/> 534	<hr/> 53	<hr/> 148	<hr/> 735

There were then only five Protestants at that post, probably the Hudson's Bay Company's clerk (Mr. Roderick McKenzie) and his family.

Bishop Taché had also been edified at the evidences he had seen of the great respect his priests had succeeded in inspiring into the minds of their flocks. An old woman of Athabasca was bewailing her fate after the loss of her son. Father Grandin having heard of her misfortune tried to console her by the promise that, after due preparation, he would admit her to her first communion. She looked askance at the young priest, as if she did not realize the import of his words.

Thinking that he had not expressed himself in the

proper language, the missionary hailed a passer-by who, being a halfbreed, knew both French and Chipewyan.

"I can make myself understood about everything except one point," he said in his native tongue. "This old woman cannot make out what I mean when I say that I shall prepare her for her first communion."

"Oh! yes; I did understand the Praying One," immediately corrected the woman, when the priest's words had been interpreted to her. "But I thought that surely he must make a mistake and did not mean what he said. For who could have supposed that a poor old creature like myself might ever be granted such a great favour?"

But it was written that Bishop Taché should not stay long at St. Boniface. After having spent three weeks there, he was off again, this time for Europe, whither most important business called him (September 14, 1856).

CHAPTER XVI.

SUCCESES AND TRIALS.

1857-1859.

According to the modern discipline of the Church, a bishop gets a coadjutor chiefly because of old age and consequent inability to perform the duties of his charge. In 1856 Mgr. Taché was probably the youngest bishop of the whole Catholic world. He was blessed with good health and very active dispositions. He could not therefore invoke age or infirmities as a pretext for getting an auxiliary. But a no less pressing reason was the extraordinary size of his diocese—1520 miles by 1300—the lack of means of communication, and the growing necessity of extending the limits of the missionary field in the north.

Taché, therefore, resolved to beg for that favour, and the better to succeed in the pursuance of his ends, he left (September 11, 1856), for Canada and Europe. In Canada he caused the hierarchy to draw up a petition to the Holy See, praying that a coadjutor be granted him. But, out of regard for his Oblate superior, Mgr. de Mazenod, he asked that the name of the candidate be not mentioned therein, as he intended to leave the choice of the same to the Superior-General of the Order to which now belonged practically all his missionaries.

On December 20, 1856, he was at the feet of his father in God, to whom he communicated his designs. After having prayed for heavenly light, Bishop de Mazenod came to the conclusion that, in spite of his youth, Father Grandin was the proper person for that exalted station, and he sent his name to Rome as that of the most worthy priest therefor.

Another measure which the missionary prelate negotiated at Marseilles was the establishing of the Grey Nuns in each of the Oblate missions. These good religious had proved invaluable to the missionaries of the Red River. Not only did they teach the young, but they reared the orphans, treated the sick, took care of the sacristies, and rendered their spiritual fathers those innumerable little services which are so appreciated in roughly organized, out-of-the-way places as are the Indian missions. Bishop Provencher had been exceptionally fortunate in his choice of an Institute of sisters for his adopted country. The Grey Nuns did not confine their activities to any particular kind of work, but were ever ready to assist in any way to the best of their abilities. The two bishops came to an agreement at Marseilles, whereby the sisters' sphere of usefulness could be extended on behalf of most of the missions.

After his formal meeting with his Superior-General, Bishop Taché entered upon a tour of preaching through France, whereby his own distant field of labour was materially benefited. Then as now the

French were apt to go to extremes; but they always professed admiration for the self-denial of an apostle. The missionary bishop could not help noticing it. "It is wonderful how great an amount of good is done in France," he wrote. "Generosity and devotion are characteristic of the French nation. May God protect her and render her worthy of the rôle which must be hers in the world!"

He also visited some houses of his Order within the British Isles, and likewise came in contact with some of the members of the famous Hudson's Bay Company Committee in London. There he further met Sir George Simpson, who graciously granted him a free passage for two fathers and one brother from London to York Factory.

During his visit to Canada he repeated his exertions on behalf of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Not only was he successful from a financial standpoint, but he made the acquisition of a young priest who was to pass over fifty years in his distant missions. This was Rev. Zéphyrin Gascon, who soon after made a sort of deambulating novitiate in the Mackenzie district, before he could add the magical O. M. I. to his name.

The prelate also improved his opportunity by perfecting arrangements for the sending of sisters to the most desolate Oblate posts. He did not conceal from the authorities of the Grey Nuns that existence there was exceedingly precarious, in fact, an unend-

¹To his mother; Paris, 18th Dec., 1856.

ing series of privations of all kinds; but nothing could deter them from proceeding in the path of sacrifice in which they had entered.

Taché's stay in Canada lasted five months, part of which was employed in superintending the printing of those Indian books which we have seen him preparing at Athabasca, in the company of Father Faraud. Thus were printed Cree primers and books of devotion in Roman type, and Chippewayan booklets in syllabic characters. These were in after years to singularly facilitate instruction among the children of the frozen North.

On his return, he passed one day with that devoted, but unsuccessful, missionary, Rev. Mr. Belcourt, whom he found "in a most painful position" at Pembina. On November 6, 1857, he was again resting in the shadow of the cathedral with the "turrets twain" at St. Boniface.

Great was his joy in finding himself in the midst of brother Oblates and collaborators, though that joy was somewhat tempered by the absence of a familiar face which had disappeared during his voyage. After eleven years of devotion to the cause of the missions, Father Bermond had left Red River on the 25th of August preceding the bishop's return. His great administrative talents and the solidity of his judgment had singled him out as a fit party to send on an official visit in the name of the Superior-General of the Oblates, to the establishments his Institute possessed on the Pacific coast. The wise

regulations he then drew up for the guidance of his brother missionaries are still quoted with reverence by the successors of the pioneer Oblates of British Columbia. His task accomplished west of the Rocky Mountains, Father Bermond returned to France.²

The loss of so precious a subject was compensated for by the arrival at St. Boniface of Fathers Frain and Eynard, accompanied by Brother Kearney. Those missionaries had profited by the generosity of the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, crossing, first of all Catholic priests since the days of Rev. Mr. Bourke, from London to Hudson Bay. They reached Red River about a month before the bishop's own return. Two months earlier still, Father Bermond had himself welcomed Father Lefloch, the scholastic Brother Isidore Clut, and the two lay Brothers Salasse and Perréard.

These recruits allowed of the final erection of St. Norbert into a regular parish. Father Lestanc, who had momentarily succeeded Father Bermond at the head of the Oblate community, was named to the new post, with Father Eynard and Brother Kearney as assistants. The others awaited at St. Boniface their obedience for some northern mission. Meanwhile, Bro. Clut was admitted to the priesthood, December 20, 1857. This ordination brought the number of professed Oblate fathers in the diocese up to fourteen. There were moreover two secular

²Where he was appointed superior of one of the most important of the houses of his Order.

priests, the veteran Mr. Thibault and the new arrival, Mr. Gascon. Furthermore, the material side of the various establishments was looked after by lay brothers, of whom the same territory now counted six.

At the civil capital thereof, Fort Garry, just opposite St. Boniface, the bishop found cause for congratulation in the results he witnessed of the education given by his predecessor. Ever since 1855, François Bruneau, the pupil of Bishop Provencher, had occupied a seat in the colonial council, thus showing that, if the prelate had been unable to make priests of halfbreeds, he none the less succeeded in forming in the ranks of that race good, honourable men, respected by everybody;³ in short, men that were a credit to the education they had received.

Shortly before Taché's return, on September 19, 1857, three other halfbreeds had been admitted into the same select circle, by becoming members of the Council of Assiniboia. These were Pascal Breland, Maximilien Genton and Salomon Hamelin.

And lastly, Taché was himself received therein as successor to Bishop Provencher on June 3, 1858.

³François Bruneau had been a member of a committee appointed by L. Riel, in 1849, with a view to obtaining the liberation of W. Sayer. He died of typhoid fever, in the summer of 1863, together with eleven members of his family. The historian J. J. Hargrave says in this connection: "One of the most generally regretted victims was Mr. François Bruneau, a French halfbreed, and a most useful and respected justice of the peace. He was the leading councillor selected from among those of his nationality and race, among whom his influence was very great" ("Red River," p. 349. Montreal, 1871).

His previous stay at Ile à la Crosse and consequent endless travels, first to the north and then to Europe, had not permitted of his taking sooner the place that was due him in that assembly.

In this connection, we might perhaps call attention to a slight alteration in the proceedings usual on similar occasions. Instead of recording an oath as having been taken by the bishop, the minutes of the council have it that "the Lord Bishop of St. Boniface affirmed that he would truly perform the duties of a consellor of Assiniboia and took his seat as a counsellor." The reader will likewise notice the peculiar wording of that statement. We leave it to him to decide whether the change of councillor into counsellor was intentional, or simply the mistake of a scribe.

What does not seem to have been accidental on the part of the latter is the title of Lord Bishop given Mgr. Taché on this and all subsequent occasions. This roused the indignation of a Rev. Griffith Owen Corbett, the Anglican incumbent of Headingly, on the Assiniboine, who was destined to acquire, not long after, a most unenviable notoriety in the colony. In a local newspaper, the "Nor'-Wester," founded December 28, 1859, by two Canadians, Messrs. Buckingham and Coldwell, that clergyman protested against the bestowal on a Romish bishop of a title that was by law reserved for the prelates of the Anglican Church. Mr. Oram, a convert who had come up from Eastern Canada

to assist the Catholic teaching body, took up the gauntlet and defended in the same publication⁴ the action of the clerk of the council. In this task help came to him from a most unexpected quarter. This was no other than Louis Riel, the miller of the Seine,⁵ as he was beginning to be called, who, in a style that was far from classical, upheld likewise the wording of the minutes of said council.

As a result, it was generally conceded that Mr. Corbett had raised a tempest in a teapot, and Taché continued to be styled Lord Bishop.

Mgr. Taché was far from being a figure-head in that body. One of his first acts as a legislator was to present, in conjunction with the Bishop of Rupert's Land, a petition from the parishioners of St. John against the liquor evil, which was beginning again to take too tangible a form. Intoxicants were

⁴That sheet appeared only every fortnight, and the subscription price was originally twelve shillings a year.

⁵In view of the historical character of that halfbreed and his close relationship to the Louis Riel of 1870 and 1885, some unpublished details on the circumstances which led to his no less historical designation of "miller of the Seine," being applied to him, may prove acceptable. On Dec. 9th, 1852, he petitioned the Council of Assiniboia thus: "Your fulling mill has not been employed once for five years. As there is no appearance of more encouragement in the future, I take the liberty of addressing you this note, to know if you would sell it out. As I am about to build a water mill on the Seine River, that building would suit me well." This communication was signed Louis Rielle. In answer, the Bishop of St. Boniface, Mr. La Flèche and Dr. Bunn were appointed a committee to sell the building alone. On March 29th of the following year that committee "reported that Mr. Louis Rielle is willing to give £15 for everything but the mill itself, on condition of getting credit till December on his own personal security." Whereupon it was ordered that Mr. La Flèche advise him that he shall receive one pound sterling for removing the unsold part of the property, but that he must find for the remaining £14 such securities as may be satisfactory to Mr. La Flèche.

being imported from the United States, and it was asked that a tax be levied on each gallon coming thence, or that licenses, fixed at an almost prohibitive figure, be exacted for the sale thereof. A similar request was presented at the same time (December 9, 1858), from the parish of St. Andrews, while a third, in French, recited that a numerously attended meeting held in one of the halls of the bishop's palace at St. Boniface, three days before, had unanimously endorsed such a measure. One of the signers of the French document was a Mr. Amable Thebeault, probably Rev. Mr. Thibault's brother, then established, as we have seen, in St. Boniface.

That the Catholic schools for boys were not alone in turning out respectable citizens from the ranks of those halfbreeds who, at the first coming of the priests, were reputed no better than the Indians, was patent to all fair-minded Protestants. This is how the head of a party of civil engineers sent by the Government of Upper Canada, a Mr. S. J. Dawson, whose name has become ever since associated with a famous road from the Lake of the Woods to the Red River, referred to the sisters' own school which he visited in 1858:

"The Grey Nuns have a large establishment just opposite to the mouth of the Assiniboine, and another, a smaller one, at the White Horse Plains. The ladies devote themselves chiefly to the instruction of the children of mixed Canadian and Indian origin, and the effects of their zeal, piety and unfaill-



THE BEGINNINGS OF A SCHOOL IN THE WEST

ing industry are manifest in the social improvement of the race, for whose benefit they are content to lead a life of toil and privation."¹⁶

This appreciation of the Protestant gentleman could not be juster. For it may as well be remarked that the good nuns wielded as easily the scythe, and other agricultural implements, as those which are in our minds more usually associated with their sex, such as the needle, the combing-cards and the spinning-wheel.

Another even more distinguished traveller of the same faith as Mr. Dawson, the Earl of Southesk, visited Red River one year later. That gentleman was apparently as alive to the good derived from such institutions, though he viewed it from a somewhat different standpoint. His reference to the good sisters is typical, and will perhaps interest our lady readers. This is what he has in his journal, under date June 6, 1859:

"On Monday a very agreeable hour was spent by Dr. Rae and myself in visiting the Roman Catholic nunnery, following an introduction to the Lady Superior afforded us by Bishop Taché's kindness. It was chiefly an educational establishment, managed by the nuns, who, I believe, were Sisters of Charity. They wore an extremely quaint and pretty dress. The close-fitting gown was of fawn-coloured cotton, with sleeves square and open at the wrist.

¹⁶"Report on the Exploration of the country between Lake Superior and the Red River," p. 24. Toronto, 1859.

Over the gown was a dark blue cotton petticoat, with small white spots, which, reaching only to within six inches from the ground, showed a narrow strip of narrow fawn beneath. A heavy kerchief of black material covered the shoulders, and was crossed over the bosom; a black poke-bonnet, above a plain white cap, completed the costume. A gilt crucifix hung from a girdle round the waist. Mocassins were worn instead of shoes, according to the universal custom of the country, to which even the bishops conformed. These excellent nuns educated about forty children, mostly from among the French population. We had the pleasure of seeing a few of the pupils, whom Sister C—— very obligingly sent for, asking them to give us some specimens of their progress in music. Two nice looking dark girls of fourteen came in, and played several pieces on a piano-forte, which, I confess, it surprised me to see in this remote and inaccessible land; two pretty little fair-haired children took their place, and, like the others, played in a pleasing and very creditable manner. The institution was universally spoken of as most useful and popular, and as being in all respects remarkably well conducted.”¹⁸

Mr. Dawson, as we have seen, refers to only two convents in Red River. Very shortly after his pass-

¹⁸Countée. It should be remarked that the noble visitor, when mentioning forty as the number of the pupils, must have referred only to the boarders.

¹⁹“Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains,” pp. 32, 33. Edinburgh, 1875.

age, a third was established, December 29, 1858, in the new parish of St. Norbert, with two nuns, Sisters Laurent and Dandurand, as foundresses. The bishop presided himself at their installation, after having bestowed on their institution a piece of land four chains wide and extending from the highway to the river, in addition to lands six chains wide and two miles long, on the eastern side of the Red.

While the bishop was thus inaugurating the policy of convent extension decided on at Marseilles, he did not lose sight of the main object of his trip to the country of his ancestors. Neither do we, though we now seem to have reached the end of the year 1858, and the subject had first been broached in 1856. As Father Grandin's name had been purposely left out of the Canadian bishops' petition, the Holy See required a written act of delegation of their rights to choosing the candidate in favour of the Bishop of Marseilles. Hence a delay which prevented Grandin from being appointed before December 11, 1857.

The loss of time was a great trial for Mgr. Taché, who seemed so much afraid lest another should be named at Rome that he wrote, March 15, 1857: "Should it not be certain that the Holy Father is going to name the first on the list [that is, Father Grandin], you should insist on having him."⁷⁹

In December of that year, Mgr. de Mazerod's candidate was indeed appointed Bishop of Satala in

⁷⁹To Bishop de Mazerod, Superior-General of the Oblates.

partibus infidelium and coadjutor to Mgr. Taché with right of future succession; but at that time the humble and retiring missionary was probably the one of the priests in the diocese of St. Boniface who least dreamed of such a promotion. Yet God, who "chooses the weak of the world,"¹⁰ had set him apart as the elect of His heart, because of his innate simplicity and innocence, to which were now added a zeal and devotion to duty which had already stood the test of the most severe ordeals.

"Do you sometimes think of God, my child?" a great prelate and famous theologian¹¹ had long before asked of young Grandin.

To which the poor lad, trembling at the thought of his remissness, had answered with a blush:

"At times I do not," a reply truly sublime in its simplicity.

But God did think of him, and so did his superiors. In prevision of his forthcoming elevation, he had been ordered to Ile à la Crosse, where he learnt of it in July, 1858. Useless to tarry on his extreme astonishment, and describe his protestations on receiving such unexpected intelligence. Those who have personally known the saintly Grandin may well imagine his misgivings, not to say terror, on that occasion.

Even if he had been accessible to attacks of

¹⁰1 Cor. i. 27; words which were chosen by Bishop Grandin as the motto of his coat-of-arms.

¹¹Mgr. Bouvier, Bishop of Le Mans, France.

vainglory, circumstances just then so shaped themselves at Ile à la Crosse that he would soon have been hurled from his pedestal. We have already had occasion to mention one spell of uneasiness among the neophytes of that mission. For the second time, always on account of changes in their clergy, some of them had shown signs of discontent that bordered on insubordination, when, of a sudden, a most unusual event converted this into open revolt.

We know that all American aborigines, but especially the Dénés, have the strongest faith in dreams, and are otherwise extremely credulous. One morning a young man of Ile à la Crosse woke up with the firm persuasion that he was the Son of God, and, strange to say, he found many partizans in his own tribe. In a short time everything was upside down among the natives; at his bidding, his followers burnt down all their possessions, killed their dogs, destroyed their furs, and did away with their best pieces of wearing apparel.

This took place some distance from the mission. To cut away the evil in its roots and prevent the expansion of the movement, Father Grandin thought it incumbent on himself to go and confute the offspring of *Saskhe* (Bearfeet) who pretended to be the Son of God. As soon as the energumen saw him:

"Comé on, my son," he cried out; "come on, and

I shall make you see wonders. You shall see the tables of Moses. *Theos! Theos!*"¹²

He had in his hands a magical roll of birch rind fully six feet long, with which he assaulted the missionary, who had to beat a hasty retreat to his canoe. Then as one of Grandin's men had not been able to embark, the priest went back to show the people that they had to deal with an impostor or an unbalanced mind, since the son of Bearfeet could not make good his boast that he knew all languages. He questioned him in French and Latin; but the Indian avoided the test by remarking that such languages were not made for Chippewayans, and that he did not see the advisability of showing in presence of such poor people his proficiency in the same.

Yet the reasoning powers of his compatriots seemed to have been momentarily obscured by the workings of an over-excited imagination. Nevertheless even in the throng of Indians in the midst of whom he stood, Grandin found at least one old man who had remained proof against the contagion.

"They advised me to go and see the Son of God," he confidentially said to the priest; "when I came, I recognized the son of Bearfeet. Then, as he insisted in striking me with his pretended table of commandments, to impart his spirit to me, and exhorted me to part with everything I had, I could not help saying in a low voice: 'If thou art really the Son of

¹²Greek word meaning God, which the Indian had probably acquired from the service on Good Friday, when they are used by the Church.

God, may thou return forthwith to heaven, and leave us alone on earth!''

The psychological epidemic gradually abated, in proportion as the novelty wore off; but the missionary felt deeply disturbed in mind by the way people were duped and imposed upon to whom he had been so kind, and who had so far responded so unanimously to his exertions on their behalf. We hasten to add that, with time, not only the visionary's relations, but even the poor deluded author of the whole trouble returned to the fold.

This, however, did not happen before Father Grandin had become the Bishop of Satala, by the consecration he received at the hands of Mgr. de Mazenod at Marseilles, on November 30, 1859.

This was indeed a consoling event for Mgr. Taché, who just then stood in great need of consolations. We have already chronicled the numerous arrivals of Oblates in the course of 1857. This unusual influx of evangelical labourers seems to have been pre-ordained of God, to place his representative in the Northwest in a position to efficaciously face the storm that was at hand in the very farthest post of his diocese. In 1858 an event which took everybody by surprise rendered the services of all the newcomers into the vineyard of the Lord especially welcome. Suddenly it was learned that an archdeacon of the Church of England, the Rev. James Hunter, was going north, bent on proselytizing among the Indians in favour of his own sect. He passed by the

Catholic stations of Ile à la Crosse, Athabasca and Great Slave Lake, and went as far as Fort Simpson, in the very heart of the Mackenzie district. Anderson had now his revenge for the humiliation inflicted on him by the young Bishop of St. Boniface.

A full acquaintance with both the northern officer and the clergyman who became his tool makes it hard to believe that any other motive animated the former in the course of the transaction which resulted in the unexpected step taken by the latter. On the other hand, zeal for the salvation of souls could scarcely have been the moving spirit with Mr. Hunter. First of all, he promised his services only for the period of one year. Then an eminent Protestant could not help remarking to Mgr. Taché: "I cannot understand this. There is no zeal in that man; his going there is nothing but the token of a mere spirit of opposition to you."¹³

Be this as it may, the danger was clear; it was urgent to minimize it as much as possible. To attain that end, not a few changes in the personnel of the Oblates became necessary. Father Clut had already been sent to Athabasca, where he took the place of Father Grollier, now entrusted with the mission of St. Joseph, on Great Slave Lake, with Father Eynard and Brother Perréard as assistants. Father Grollier was physically a small man, polite as a

¹³*Vingt Années de Missions*, p. 104, where the author quotes the gentleman in his original English, thereby implying that he reproduces his very words.

Frenchman and timid as one who realized that, while in the land of foes, he sadly lacked familiarity with their language. But the little Frenchman was full of zeal and pluck. He did not shrink from the task of measuring swords with the portly archdeacon in the very camp of his adversaries. He immediately went down to Fort Simpson, and, as a result of his exertions on behalf of truth, he had the consolation of seeing nearly all the Indians side with him and profit by his daily instructions, in spite of the opposition of *bourgeois* and clerks. He put that post under the protection of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; but, unfortunately for the perseverance of his catechumens, the lack of permanent lodgings forced him to return to the Great Slave Lake Mission.

CHAPTER XVII.

"UNTO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD."

1859-1860.

At St. Boniface, still other labourers were arriving from France and Ireland. These were Fathers Mestre and Moulin, who had for a companion Brother Cunningham, while, somewhat later, that is, by the end of October, 1858, six Grey Nuns, under the leadership of their provincial superior, came to swell the ranks of their sisters on the Red River, pending the organization of the projected foundations in the north.

A widening of the field of action corresponded with this increase in the ministerial and teaching personnel. That same autumn, Father Faraud left his mission of Lake Athabasca to visit the nomadic tribe of the Beavers, already evangelized by Rev. Mr. Bourassa. At the same time the employees of Fort Vermillion and Dunvegan profited by his ministry. A "walk" of seventeen days on snowshoes took him back to his headquarters at the Nativity.

Then, in order to forestall the minister, Father Grandin was likewise arming himself with those awkward, if necessary, adjuncts to winter travelling on the snows of the north, and, in March, 1859, was visiting Fort Rae, whose Indians had never

been evangelized. This place he confided to the care of the great enemy of revolt and protestation against lawful authority, the Archangel St. Michael.¹

Nearer the centre of civilization in the Middle West, the base of a parish was laid by the visits of Father Lefloch to a group of halfbreeds who had settled at Pointe-des-Chênes, or Oak Point. The year 1859 saw these humble beginnings of a place which, in course of time, was to develop into the flourishing parish of Ste. Anne des Chênes. The latter name was due to the nationality of its first pastor, a Breton, and therefore a great servant of St. Ann.

Meanwhile, the young priest whom Mgr. Taché had brought from Canada, Rev. Mr. Gascon, had been soliciting the favour of entering the Congregation of the Oblates. In compliance with his request, he was allowed to commence, March 9, 1859, the somewhat irregular novitiate to which we have already alluded. The start was made at St. Norbert under the able and pious Father Lestanc. But the new novice was not destined to remain long in the solitude of that place. In returning from the north, after his year of efforts on behalf of Protestantism, Archdeacon Hunter was bringing to the headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Garry a petition from the officers of the Mackenzie district to the effect that the Catholic priests should be de-

¹This post was well guarded. In 1865 a Protestant mission was established there, which had to be abandoned owing to the fidelity of the Indians to the teaching of their first apostle.

barred from working in that far-off land. The arch-deacon was replaced by a Red River schoolmaster, a Mr. W. W. Kirkby, who was ordained for the occasion, and proved to be a most active and resourceful man. His going north surprised the missionaries, who had fondly hoped that Hunter's discomfiture had taught a lesson to his co-religionists.

On the other hand, thanks to the intervention of Bishop Taché, instead of the object of the traders' petition being attained, permission was granted to one of the Catholic priests to pass the winter at one of the Company's farthest posts. So that an individual who had asked for the expulsion of the Catholic missionaries from the northernmost district had actually to lodge one of them under his own roof.

That missionary was the intrepid Father Grollier. He left Fort Resolution, visited his outpost of the Sacred Heart at Fort Simpson, and, descending the giant stream of the great northland, passed by Fort Norman, which he put under the patronage of St. Theresa, and reached Fort Good Hope, just within the Arctic Circle, where he spent the winter of 1859-60. This was the origin of the famous Mission of Our Lady of Good Hope, whence Grollier was ultimately to bid farewell to its frozen steppes for a better world.

Meanwhile, through the instrumentality of the devoted priest, the Glad Tidings had been taken considerably over two thousand miles away from

St. Boniface: The prediction of the Royal Prophet "their words [have reached] unto the ends of the world" was nearing fulfilment.

But this displacement of the superior of St. Joseph's Mission had created a void at Great Slave Lake. To fill it up, the novice, Father Gascon, was sent thither, and put under the direction of Father Eynard. Father Végreville had then the charge of Ile à la Crosse, while Father Rémas was temporarily at St. Boniface, whence he started, August 3, 1859, with three nuns who were to be the nucleus of a new establishment at his own mission of Ste. Anne. These were Sisters Emery, Lamy and Alphonse. After a voyage which involved many of the inconveniences proper to the country, difficulties arising from a most disagreeable season as well as from the fatigue incident to such peregrinations, the party reached Ste. Anne September 24, 1859.

Little more than a month before the arrival of the courageous nuns, Father Rémas' confrères had greeted a newcomer of a different kind. This was the same Earl of Southesk whose appreciation of the nuns' costume and efficiency at St. Boniface we have already recorded. The English nobleman was no less struck by what he saw at the western mission. A disinterested visitor, in spite of his very strong anti-Catholic prejudices, he could not help comparing the work and person of the poor priests

*Psalm xviii. 5.

with what he had seen at the Protestant stations. He writes in this connection:

"On our arrival at St. Ann, we proceeded to the mission house, where we met with a most cordial reception. Had the pleasure of dining with Pères Lacome and Le Frain at the Roman Catholic mission house—agreeable men and perfect gentlemen. What an advantage Rome has in this respect—Protestants constantly send vulgar, underbred folk to supply their missions: Rome sends polished, highly educated gentlemen. Then how much the best is her mode of addressing the Indian mind; for example, every Indian who joins the Mission Temperance Society is given a handsome silver medal³ to wear. This appeals to his pride or vanity, and is far more effectual than mere dry exhortations.

"On the pressing invitation of my hosts, I remained for the night at the mission house. Everything there is wonderfully neat and flourishing, it is a true oasis in the desert. The cows fat and fine, the horses the same, the dogs, the very cats the same. A well-arranged and well-kept garden, gay with many flowers, some of them the commonest flowers of the woods and plains, brought to perfection by care and labour. The house beautifully clean; the meals served up as in a gentleman's dining-room."⁴

The noble traveller then goes on to explain that the *pièce de résistance* of those meals consisted of

³The earl's text reads "model," an evident misprint.

⁴"Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains," pp. 167, 168.

wild fruit, which he must have so much the more appreciated as his own itinerary forced him to rely on the canned luxuries which the missionaries could not afford. Had he stayed any length of time, or arrived at any other season than that of the wild berries, he would not have been long without perceiving their penury, though theirs was by far the most prosperous of all the northwestern missions, owing to its situation within the wheat growing and stock raising region.

The extent of the poverty common to all the northern posts was truly amazing. Even flour was then, and remained for many years afterwards, a veritable luxury in the north, many missionaries passing several years without tasting bread. If we consider that most of these hailed from France, where the daily diet is based on bread incomparably more than it is in America, we will better realize the intensity of their privations.

As a rule, two sacks of flour were sent yearly to each mission, one of which was for the priests themselves, and the other for their *engagé* and his family. Nor should we forget that the missionaries were generally two, sometimes three, in a place. A few bags of pemmican, tough, stale and rancid from age, were added to this, and the fathers, in spite of their bodily exertions while building up their homes or appurtenances and toiling during their travels over several feet of snow, had to rely on the denizens of the lakes for their staple food.

This was fish, annually caught in large quantities for themselves and their sleigh dogs. After having been cut open, and spread out by means of wooden spits, this was left to dry hanging from poles laid on scaffoldings. As a result of this treatment, it lost all the flavour it might have originally possessed, when, in course of time, the stench it emitted and the "animation" of which it became the theatre did not render it absolutely repulsive to anything but a famishing stomach. Famine was indeed a familiar experience with all the missionaries in the north, who usually made light of it, and replaced a missed meal by tightening their belts, as they would good-humouredly put it.

If therefore we add these privations to the fatigues and discomfort of long voyages on foot, or, worse than all, on snowshoes (the inexpressible agony of which one must experience to properly appreciate it), we will understand why a publicist felt warranted in writing that "it is well known among all the religious Orders that the missions of Athabasca-Mackenzie are the most difficult and painful in the whole world, without excepting those of China, Corea and Japan."⁵ The appropriateness of this assertion will become so much the more evident if we take into consideration the excessive severity of a climate which, in places, gives nine months of the year to a most rigorous winter.

Such were the sweets for which were longing the

⁵Judge Prendergast, in *Le Manitoba* newspaper, 28th June, 1894.



BISHOP GRANDIN, O.M.I.,
The Year of his Consecration.

members of a caravan which, on July 9, 1860, appeared in sight of the humble village of St. Norbert. It was led by Mgr. Grandin, who had been unable to return earlier on account of a serious illness due to the impression made on his sensitive nature by his consecration and consequent responsibilities. With him were Fathers Séguin, Caer and Gasté; Brother Boisramé; Mr. Oram, the Montreal convert whom we have already mentioned; three Grey Nuns, and their two lay assistants.

Bishop Taché had gone up to meet them, and they rested till the morrow with Father Lestanc, the parish priest of the locality. Another member of the missionary party, the scholastic Brother Grouard,* was left at Quebec to complete his studies. Among the foregoing priests, one, Rev. Alphonse Gasté, belonged likewise to the secular clergy. He was stationed at St. Norbert to take the place vacated by the novice Father Gascon.

Bishop Grandin was no sooner in St. Boniface than he again fell sick. Yet, after twenty days of patient suffering, though he was no better, he insisted on being allowed to return to his northern mission. Despite all protestations, he was actually carried from his bed to the vehicle that was to take him to the point where he was to embark for Ile à la Crosse. The episode of the bogus Son of God had

*Afterwards Vicar-Apostolic of Athabasca. It may be worth remarking that most of the northern bishops, Taché, Faraud, Clut, Pascal and Grouard, reached America before they had been ordained priests.

made a deep impression on his mind: he had the good of that mission so much at heart that he longed to see the denouement of that escapade.

With him left Father Séguin, Bro. Boisramé and three Sisters of Charity. The party reached destination, October 4, 1860. It is therefore to that date that we must ascribe the foundation of the Ile à la Crosse convent. The names of the foundresses are likewise worth recording: they were Sisters Agnes, Pépin and Boucher. Their voyage had been exceptionally unpleasant, and the sixty-seven days it lasted from St. Boniface were a series of accidents, mishaps and hardships of all kinds.

Yet these difficulties had at least one good result: they entirely cured Mgr. Grandin.

The year 1860 was indeed a period of foundations. In addition to the convents already established at St. François-Xavier, St. Norbert, Ste. Anne and Ile à la Crosse, a more modest institution of a similar character was started on September 20, 1860, at a place six miles up the Red River (from St. Boniface), where for a long time a group of half-breed settlers had been in existence.⁷ As that locality had no resident priest, Bishop Taché attended himself to the religious wants of the sisters, driving thither every morning to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice

⁷The first sisters of St. Vital were Sisters L'Espérance, D'Youville and Connolly, the latter being the halfbreed daughter of Wm. C. Connolly, the superintendent of New Caledonia, now northern British Columbia, and a sister of Lady Douglas, the wife of the first Governor of British Columbia.

for their benefit. Such were the beginnings of St. Vital, a settlement the Bishop of St. Boniface named after the patron saint of his coadjutor.

To compensate for the joy consequent on so many accessions to the ranks of the missionaries, clerical and lay, Bishop Taché saw in the evening of July 27th, that is, while Mgr. Grandin was still with him, the three Christian Brothers depart for the east. Their superior was an old man, who, discouraged at the sight of ordinary difficulties, had obtained the recall of himself and companions. This constrained the bishop to put Father Lefloch at the head of the college, with Mr. Oram as professor of English.

Four days after the arrival at Ile à la Crosse of Mgr. Grandin's party, two other Oblates, Father Simonet and Brother Jean Glénat, were being welcomed at St. Boniface. The latter was destined expressly for the bishop's palace, so that his presence might lift from the prelate's shoulders those menial duties that he had so far found himself in the necessity of performing. His generosity had previously led him to part in favour of the missions with all the lay brothers sent him.

Brother Jean, as he was commonly called, did not find his new master at home. Bishop Taché had left for the missions of the Far West and Ile à la Crosse. At the last place he took everybody by surprise on October 30, 1860. His warm heart delighted in visiting his children of the frigid North, and he now wanted to devise with his coadjutor measures for

their spiritual welfare which the illness of the latter at St. Boniface had prevented him from considering.

Organization was now the order of the day, as the missionaries had to cope with the activities of the Protestant ministers and the ill-will of most of the northern traders. His representatives, on the other hand, were doing wonders in their respective fields of action. The Apostle of the Arctic Circle, Father Grollier, had visited St. Theresa's Mission, at Fort Norman, where he was startled to find that, previous to his arrival, cockle had been sown among the wheat. As the lonely priest had been expecting a confrère at Good Hope, he had somewhat tarried there, with the consequence that the large number of Indians who had congregated at Fort Norman expressly to see him met instead little Mr. Kirkby, the ex-schoolmaster, who told them that the French priest would not come, and that, after all, both religions were but two forms of the same. As a result, fifteen consented to be baptized by the minister, while all the others stoutly refused to be lured into accepting his services.

Father Grollier was too uncompromising a man to be liked by the Hudson's Bay Company traders. He was denied hospitality at Fort Norman; but the exhibition of the governor's letter opened doors to him that would otherwise have remained fast closed. He stayed there two months, and reinstated in the fold five of the fifteen Protestants made by Mr. Kirkby. Then he left for Fort Simpson, which he

reached in the middle of August, and repeated for the benefit of the Indians of that post what he had done for those of Fort Norman.

At the same time, Father Eynard visited the missionary station of Big Island (Sacred Heart of Mary), on Great Slave Lake (August, 1860). Then he set out for Fort Rae, while, conformably to his orders, his novice, Father Gascon, manning a small birch bark canoe, braved the rage of that inland sea, and, in spite of the cold and drenching rain, descended the Mackenzie as far as Fort Simpson, where he agreeably surprised Father Grollier.

The local Protestant missionary was just on the point of leaving for an excursion in the direction of Fort des Liards, on the Liard River. As Grollier had previously rendered some services to the *bourgeois* of the place, his confrère was allowed a passage to that western post on the Company's boat. Thus it was that Father Gascon reached destination (Fort des Liards) September 4, 1860, a few days before the minister, who arrived in time to assist at the plantation of a large cross, as a token of pre-occupancy by the Catholics. This post the missionary placed under the protection of the Archangel St. Raphael, the patron of travellers.

Meantime, Father Grollier was more and more on the way to fulfill the Psalmist's prophecy. This time he descended the Mackenzie to the fort on Peel River, where the northernmost of all the Déné tribes, the Loucheux, met the Eskimos, bent, as a rule, on

slaying as many of them as could be caught un-awares. Filled with a holy zeal in presence of the new race, the missionary caused a solemn reconciliation between Loucheux and Eskimos by means of a significant ceremony, wherein the chiefs of both nations took part, on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14, 1860).

He did more. Yielding probably to the vehement impression made on his southern nature by the thought that he was now God's first representative to the inhabitants of the very end of the New World, he gave himself the consolation of regenerating in the waters of baptism some of the Eskimos he met, after which he returned to Good Hope in a small craft of whale-skin.



FATHER GROLLIER'S SIGNATURE.

Thus were the very first Eskimos baptized. In view of our present knowledge of that nation's character, it may not be irrelevant to ask ourselves whether the new Christians persevered in the faith of their baptism, and the practice of the duties into which their parents had been initiated.*

Even barring the land of the Eskimos, it was becoming evident that no bishop could effectively

*From a letter from Bishop Grandin we gather that he baptized only children.



RT. REV. BISHOP H. FARAUD, O.M.I.,
Vicar-Apostolic of Athabasca-Mackenzie.

direct from St. Boniface such distant posts as the missions of the Mackenzie, or even those of Great Slave Lake (St. Joseph and Big Island). Therefore, after a retreat preached at Ile à la Crosse by Mgr. Taché, in presence of his coadjutor and all the fathers, it was agreed between the two prelates that the Holy See should be prayed to erect into a separate vicariate under Father Faraud, raised to the episcopal dignity, the immense districts of Athabasca and Mackenzie. It was also decided that the mission of St. Peter, on Lake Caribou, should be revisited and, if possible, put on a basis of permanency. Father Végreville was named to that post, whither he proceeded October 28th, while Father Moulin was setting out (December 1st) on a visit to Fort Carlton.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BURNING OF THE CATHEDRAL.

1860-1861.

As to Bishop Taché himself, he made for the mission of Lac la Biche, which he reached after indescribable hardships due to the extraordinary lateness of the season, whereby the usual means of locomotion over frozen lakes and along snow trails were denied him. After a confirmation service he left, December 13, 1860, for his headquarters at St. Boniface.

A long tramp over the fresh snow gave him a foretaste of the fatigues that were in store for him. Yet, on the morrow, his companion woke him up at 1 A.M., as it was his intention to catch up with two men who had started before the bishop. Long and weary seemed the hours that prelate and lay brother trudged on through the frozen plains. At ten o'clock in the morning they had to halt for a slight refectation and to rest the dogs that were hauling their baggage.

There was scarcely any wood; hence the bivouac fire seemed a mockery, and could not warm up the benumbed wayfarers. Tired out, sleepy, cold and famished, the poor prelate could not help allowing his thoughts to wander away to his home, some

fifteen hundred miles distant. There at least, he mused, he could have a decent fire and a couch to rest his bruised limbs. But on that very day and at the self-same hour, in that far-off St. Boniface for which he was yearning, the greatest disaster which ever overtook the Catholic missions of the Canadian Middle West was depriving him practically of all he possessed in the world!

Strange as this may seem, there was an intimate connection between that disaster and the old mission of Mr. Belcourt at Pembina.¹ Its new incumbent, a French priest named Joseph Goiffon, was returning from St. Paul when, wishing to get home sooner, he left his companions behind, and hurried to his mission. But, on November 3rd, he was assailed by a furious snowstorm, which, succeeding without transition to a rain which had drenched him to the bones, had for immediate effect to freeze stiff his clothing as he sat on his horse. It became intensely cold. Yet, in spite of the great inconvenience of his position, he rode on all day; but when he alighted, he could not stand up: both his feet were frozen.

He managed to dig a hole in the snow, where he passed four days and five nights without being able to stir, and destitute of fire or any other food than pieces of raw meat which he carved out of his horse, who had died by his side of cold and exposure. On

¹Rev. Mr. Belcourt had returned east in 1859, and received the charge, first of Rustico, P.E.I., then of Ste. Claire (Oct., 1865), in the County of Dorchester. He died at Shédiac, 31st May, 1874.

the 8th he was found by people who were going to the Red River Settlement. They caused him to be conveyed to Pembina, where he was charitably treated by an influential French halfbreed, named Joseph Rolette.

Three full weeks did he stay there, only to realize the extreme gravity of his case. The flesh, now in a state of putrefaction after a thorough thawing, fell off his feet, occasioning untold agony. Informed of his critical position, the Oblates of St. Boniface sent for him, and, on the 3rd of December, the surgeon cut off his right leg. The amputation of the left foot was to take place some time later, when the rupture of an artery caused a hemorrhage which utterly exhausted the strength of the patient. Just ten days after this operation, his life was despaired of by the doctors, and his death came to be hourly expected.

The poor missionary was himself resigned to his fate, while preparations for the impending funeral were being secretly made in the bishop's palace. December 14th, a nun was making candles with an assistant in the kitchen, when the dish that contained the liquid tallow was upset on the stove. The flames which immediately resulted could not be controlled, but set the palace afire, and such was the suddenness with which the conflagration spread, that it looked for a moment as if Mr. Goiffon was doomed to become its first victim. But two fathers had already rushed up to him, who saved the moribund

in spite of himself. He was going to die, he said; why not let him become the prey of the flames and save some valuables instead?

It was now bitterly cold, and, wonderful to relate, the original cause of all his troubles eventually became the poor priest's saviour. The cold stopped the hemorrhage, and Mr. Goiffon is hale and hearty at this very writing.²

But the worst remains to be told. From the palace the flames made a dash for the cathedral. This was in a short time writhing, as it were, and crackling under the sting of a merciless fire. Sister Gosse-
lin, then in charge of the sacristy, made heroic efforts to save ornaments and sacred vessels; she was not altogether without success, but she nearly remained in the brazier herself.

In the evening of that fateful 14th of December, 1860, not a book remained of the library which the bishop had prized so highly; not a sheet of paper of his invaluable archives; not a pin of his wardrobe or of that of his priests. A few smoking walls alone told of the proportions of the vanished cathedral, that monument which was the pride of Red River, but gave no idea of its original magnificence or of the rich paintings with which one of the nuns had but lately decorated its ceiling. The two spires had tumbled down, and their sweet-toned bells,

²July, 1909.

The bells of the Roman Mission
 That call from their turrets twain
 To the boatman on the river,
 To the hunter on the plain,³

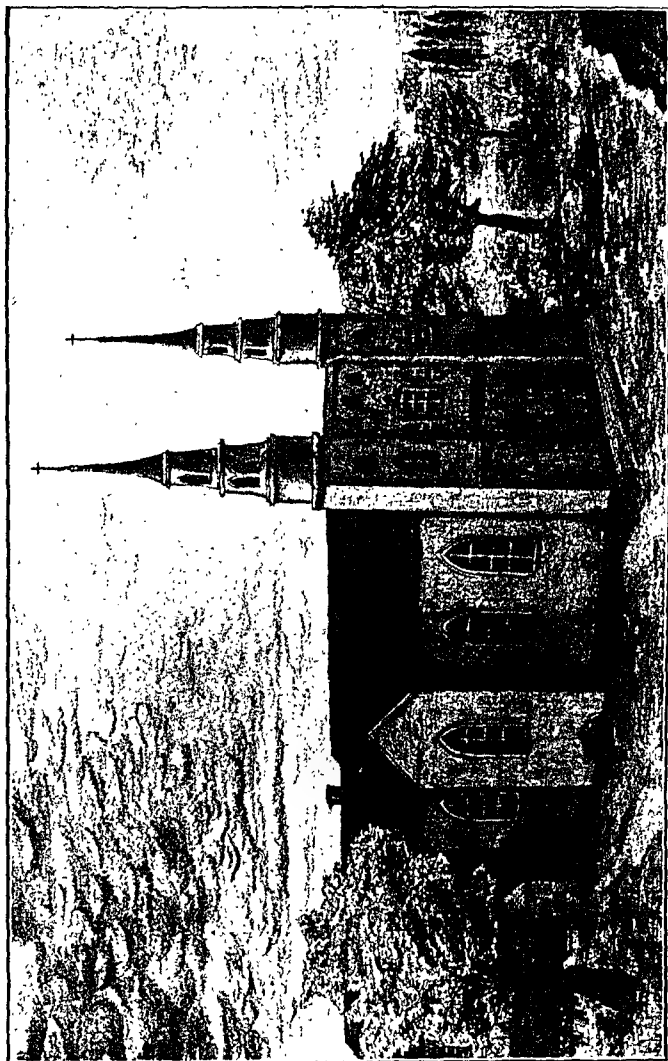
were now but a shapeless heap of metal on the ground. Nothing else remained of God's temple by the Red River but the memory of what it had been.

Such was the comfort left by the destructive element at the headquarters of the Catholic missions. Little did Bishop Taché dream of such desolation, as he yearned after home by the side of the ineffective fire smouldering at his far-off bivouac. He passed the first of January, 1861, with his brother Oblates of Ste. Anne, and there decided on the establishment of a new and better situated mission nine miles from Edmonton. Father Lacombe was given instructions to start it in the spring, and, on that account, it was placed under the protection of his patron saint. That locality has become famous under the name of St. Albert in the annals of the Church in Western Canada.

Then Bishop Taché returned to St. Boniface, and, on February 23rd, he was kneeling on the ashes of his cathedral, repeating the words of Job: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it

³"The Red River Voyageur," by Whittier. For that beautiful poem, see Appendix C.

By a strange confusion of localities, John Gilmary Shea has the following in the fourth volume of his "History of the Catholic Church in the United States," p. 650: "While the poor sufferer was lying in the Bishop's house at St. Paul, a fire broke out which reduced the church and residence to ashes."



THE CHURCH WITH THE "TURRETS TWAIN"

St. Boniface's Cathedral, with the Bishop's House in the rear.



hath pleased the Lord so be it done. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”⁴

The disaster that had bowed down the devoted head of the Catholic bishop did not deter him from continuing to fulfill his public duties, both at St. Boniface and at Fort Garry. Just before his journey to Ile à la Crosse, he caused the following motion to be carried in the Council of Assiniboia: “That neither the council, nor the different courts of Assiniboia be held on the following festival days: 1st, The Circumcision, 1st of January; 2nd, The Epiphany, 6th January; 3rd, The Annunciation, 25th March; 4th, The Ascension; 5th, Corpus Christi (the Thursday after Trinity Sunday); 6th, St. Peter and St. Paul, 29th June; 7th, All Saints, 1st November; 8th, The Immaculate Conception, 8th December; 9th, Christmas, 25th December.” Proposed by “the Lord Bishop of St. Boniface,” that motion was seconded by Salomon Hamelin, Esquire, and, being carried unanimously, it became one of the laws of the land.⁵ On his return from the same voyage, he called the attention of the same legislative body to the liquor evil, which was ever ready to spring up again. He moved that nobody be allowed to sell wine or beer without a license, obtained in the same way as former licenses for the sale of spirits. This proposal met likewise with unanimous approval in the council. The bishop would have furthermore had

⁴Job, i. 21.

⁵Minutes of the Council of Assiniboia, 27th Feb., 1860.

it decreed that no person be allowed to distill or manufacture spirituous liquor without a license for which £10 should be paid. But, for some unknown reason, he had to withdraw his motion to that effect.⁶

The Church of St. Boniface had been tried by fire: another element, water, was soon to make her tribulations identical with those of which the Psalmist sings when he says that "we have passed through fire and water."⁷ In the spring of 1861 an inundation which recalled those of 1826 and 1852 afflicted the whole settlement, and covered up the ruins of St. Boniface's cathedral.

Nor was this all. At the head of the Grey Nuns established by the Red River was a most deserving woman, Mother Valade, who may be considered as the foundress, mediately or immediately, of all the institutions belonging to their Institute in Western Canada. She had come in 1844, and had ever since directed with prudence and wisdom the sisters of St. Boniface under the high patronage of the bishop. She had been ailing for some time, suffering acute pains from an incurable malady. No cares could avert the fatal blow and she went to her reward, May 13, 1861.

Such was the desolation consequent on the action of the two destructive elements, that she was not vouchsafed a decent burial. Her remains were laid

⁶*Ibid.*, 5th March, 1861.

⁷Psalm lxx., 2.

by the clergy wading in the water, in a temporary grave dug under the rubbish accumulated within the walls of the cathedral. The good mother was mourned by Catholics and Protestants, and the journal of the colony contained a most appreciative article on the work of her life.⁸

To make up in a way for those irreparable misfortunes, two oblations⁹ took place that winter and spring within the Canadian West: those of Father Gascon, on January 6, 1861, and of Father Gasté, in the beginning of June.

It were tedious to mention in detail the movements of the missionaries in the course of that year. After what we have already said of their activity and zeal in previous years, our silence on this point could not reasonably be construed as tantamount to an admission of idleness, or even of ordinary exertions, on their part. For instance, Father Gascon's excursion of five hundred miles on snowshoes, which permitted him to visit in succession the stations of Big Island, Fort Simpson and Fort des Liards, was but a specimen of the experiences common to all the evangelical labourers in the Far North.

⁸Mother Valade was born 27th Dec., 1808, at Ste. Anne des Plaines, in the diocese of Montreal, and received at baptism the surnames of Marie Louise. She was barely 17 years of age when she entered the novitiate of the Grey Nuns, and was admitted into their Institute on the 21st of Oct., 1828. Soon after, she was entrusted with the care of the finances of a large community, a circumstance which goes to show her fitness for the work of her life on the banks of the Red River.

⁹An oblation is the solemn pronouncing of the Oblate's vows of chastity, poverty, obedience and perseverance.

In the course of one of such periodical visitations, Father Tissot happened to pass by the mission of Ste. Anne. He improved his opportunity by teaching the halfbreeds and Indians of that place and vicinity the way to make lime, as he had already done at Lac la Biche and at Ile à la Crosse, a good evidence that the Catholic missionaries are men of progress in more senses than one. The reader will easily imagine the stupefaction of the natives when they saw the priest turn stones into flour, as they would have it in their language.

We have also to put to the credit of that year (1861) the foundation of St. Laurent's Mission, on the southern end of Lake Manitoba, which was in fact nothing but the resumption of Father Bermond's post of Our Lady of the Lake in a new site.

We have furthermore noted the first steps taken in the establishment of St. Albert, and just referred to the halfbreeds from the ranks of whom its first inhabitants were to be drawn. This new settlement already boasted some twenty houses the following year, as is attested by two English travellers, Lord Milton and Dr. W. B. Cheadle, who, in spite of their evident anti-Catholic animus, have a rather flattering reference to that mission in a book which, for readableness, is surpassed by very few of its class. They call the place St. Alban's and, as usual with English visitors, Father Lacombe's name becomes Lacome under their pen. Here is what they have to say of him and his work:

"We found a little colony of some twenty houses, built on the rising ground near a small lake and river. A substantial wooden bridge spanned the latter, the only structure of the kind we had seen in the Hudson's Bay territory. The priest's house was a pretty white building, with garden around it, and adjoining it the chapel, school, and nunnery. The worthy father, M. Lacome, was standing in front of his dwelling as we came up, and we at once introduced ourselves. . . .

"Père Lacome was an exceedingly intelligent man, and we found his society very agreeable. Although a French Canadian, he spoke English very fluently, and his knowledge of the Cree language was acknowledged by the halfbreeds to be superior to their own. Gladly accepting his invitation to stay and dine, we followed him into the house, which contained only a single room with a sleeping loft above. The furniture consisted of a small table and a couple of rough chairs, and the walls were adorned with several coloured prints, amongst which were a portrait of His Holiness the Pope, another of the Bishop of Red River, and a picture representing some very substantial and stolid-looking angels. . . .

"He showed us several very respectable farms, with rich corn-fields, large bands of horses, and herds of fat cattle. He had devoted himself to the work of improving the condition of his flock, had brought out at great expense ploughs, and other farming implements for their use, and was at pres-

ent completing a corn-mill to be worked by horse power. He had built a chapel, and established schools for the halfbreed children. The substantial bridge we had crossed was the result of his exertions. Altogether this little settlement was the most flourishing community we had seen since leaving Red River, and it must be confessed that the Romish priests far excell their Protestant brethren in missionary enterprise and influence. They have established stations at Ile à la Crosse, St. Alban's, St. Ann's, and other places far out in the wilds, undeterred by danger or hardship, and gathering halfbreeds and Indians around them, have taught with considerable success the elements of civilization as well as of religion; while the latter remain inert, enjoying the ease and comfort of the Red River Settlement, or at most make an occasional summer's visit to some parts of the nearest posts."¹⁰

Here is indeed something to confound the detractors of the Catholic Church and missions, a testimony which shows once more how the Church looks after the material, as well as the spiritual, welfare of the people. In Western Canada, no less than in Mediæval Europe, she ever proved to be the civilizer *par excellence*.

The remarks of the English travellers are all the more valuable as certain passages of their book betray ignorance, bigotry, and glaring injustice. Take,

¹⁰ "The Northwest Passage by Land," pp. 184-86. London, 1866.

for instance, the following which refers to the half-breeds of Western Canada:

"Being intensely superstitious, and firm believers in dreams, omens and warnings, they are apt disciples of the Romish Church, completely under the influence of the priests in most respects, and observing the outward forms of religion with great regularity, they are grossly immoral, often dishonest and generally not trustworthy."¹¹

Commenting on these charges, Bishop Taché, in his masterpiece entitled *Esquisse sur le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique*, makes the significant remark that he could "remind the joint authors of several circumstances well known to them which should have led them to remember that 'gross immorality' is not always on the side of the French or Canadian half-breeds."¹² He then recalls the scriptural injunction: "Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou cast out the mote of thy brother's eye,"¹³ and ends by declaring that, once they have embraced Christianity, the half-breeds can be classed among the really moral people.

Useless to remind the reader of the fact that Taché's familiarity with this particular subject is incomparably superior to that of any other writer. Yet, as it is our practice to rely entirely on non-Catholic testimony, here is what we find in the report

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹²*Op. cit.*, 2nd ed., p. 82.

¹³Matt. vii. 5.

of S. J. Dawson, the civil engineer already mentioned: "In regard to the social condition of the settlement, crime is scarcely known."¹⁴ . . . During our residence in the settlement, and on our exploratory excursions I employed many of the half-breeds, and was thrown of necessity so much among them that I had good opportunities of observing their character, and it is much to their credit and that of their instructors, that I am able to say that I never once heard an oath or an indelicate expression made use of among them. This is different from what may be too often observed among the lower orders of other communities. . . . In travelling in the west, if I had the organization of a party, I would choose about an equal number of halfbreeds and French Canadian voyageurs."¹⁵

In a primitive society, where life is so free and so untrammelled by the restraints and conventions of our civilization, it may be safely asserted that people who will never use the least indelicate expression are not likely to be addicted to immoral habits.

As to the halfbreeds being dishonest, seldom has so patent a slander been published by a responsible party. Perfect honesty is, on the contrary, the very characteristic of the French halfbreeds, so much so indeed that it was the advent among them of strangers from Canada which forced them to resort to locks and keys, devices which had previously been

¹⁴The Catholic halfbreeds then formed the great majority of the half-caste population.

¹⁵*Op. cit.*, pp. 24, 25.

considered a useless luxury at Red River. Abundant Protestant testimony is available on this point; I choose the following because it is typical. Alexander Ross, no admirer of the French halfbreeds, mentions this instance of unmistakable honesty:

"Before reaching Pembina, on one occasion, a gentleman on his way to the States forgot, in his camping place, a tin box containing 580 sovereigns in gold, and in silver and bills the amount of £450 more. The following night, however, a halfbreed named Saint Matte happened to encamp on the same spot, picked up the box, followed the gentleman a day's journey, and delivered box and contents into his hands to the utmost farthing, well knowing it was money. Considering their poverty, we might well speak of Saint Matte's conduct in the highest strains of praise."¹⁰

And the same author adds that "this might be taken as an index of the integrity of the whole body, generally speaking." He also refers, on the following page, to the well-known policy of those people "to speak and act kindly towards each other," a Christian disposition that can certainly not be put to the credit of their detractors.

We will not end our review of the events of 1861 without chronicling a second voyage of the Bishop of St. Boniface to Canada and Europe. Its object was to cause the plans ripened at Ile à la Crosse to be approved by the proper authority, as well as to

¹⁰ "The Red River Settlement," p. 250.

collect funds for rebuilding the burnt cathedral and episcopal residence. Taché left in June with Father Frain, whose health had been unsatisfactory since his arrival in the northwest.

Just at the same time, the new Oblate, Father Gasté, proceeded with Father Végreville and Bro. Perréard to Lake Caribou, northeast of Île à la Crosse, where he finally established St. Peter's Mission, which for so many years was to be his home. A frigid home, indeed; for, in the opinion of Bishop Taché, this was the most difficult of all the missionary stations of the north, owing to the exceptional severity of the climate, which precludes the possibility of almost any kind of vegetation, and consequently entails privations unknown under more clement skies.

Finally, it was likewise in the beginning of June, 1861, that Bishop Grandin undertook a famous apostolic visitation of the northern missions which was to last upwards of three years. We shall now briefly entertain the reader with the most salient features of the travels and dangers consequent thereon.

CHAPTER XIX.

“IN JOURNEYING OFTEN.”

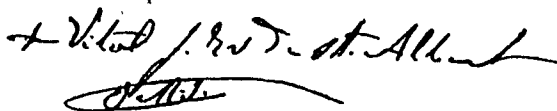
1861-1864.

Pope Pius IX. is reported to have called the Oblate missionaries of subarctic America the “Martyrs of Cold.” This designation, while picturesquely expressive and true, conveys to the mind but one of the colours that combine in making a faithful picture of the apostles of the frigid zone. A no less exalted personage, St. Paul himself, more completely depicts their life when he enumerates the hardships he had to undergo. For indeed the northern missionaries were like him “in journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren, in labour and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.”¹

To prove the appositeness of this description as applied to the obscure heroes of the north, and to give once for all an adequate idea of their work and environment, we will momentarily turn aside from the consideration of the various personalities in the Lord’s vineyard and concentrate our attention on the doings of their chief, the new Bishop of Satala, Mgr. Grandin. At the same time, we must remark

¹II. Cor. xi, 26, 27.

by way of qualification that the exalted station he occupied among his Oblate brethren naturally diminished his hardships in proportion to the respect shown him.



BISHOP GRANDIN'S SIGNATURE.

Bent on visiting all the missionary posts of the north, in spite of the delicate state of his health, the young prelate left Ile à la Crosse June 2, 1861, accompanied by Brother Boisramé. He had just preached a fruitful mission crowned by a procession of the Blessed Sacrament, in the course of which was displayed all the pomp possible with the presence of two assistant priests. His means of locomotion was the Hudson's Bay Company's boat, wherein were piled up bales of furs, tenting and cooking impedimenta, boxes of all kinds, dogs and people of all nationalities. So frequent were the hindrances to progress, along the wild streams followed, that most of the time the bishop had to beat his way through the trailless woods, in order to facilitate the operations of the crew.

On the 6th the party was in sight of the Great Methy Portage, where Grandin passed two days and two nights preaching, confessing and confirming, while the local priest, Father Séguin, was teaching catechism and prayers. Then, accompanied by that

missionary, he walked across the portage under a pouring rain, and repeated at the other end the same ministerial work, after which he set out in a birch bark canoe that was bursted in shooting the rapids, to the peril of the bishop's life.

After four days' navigation, two of which were to the accompaniment of a drenching rain against which there was no protection, he reached the Mission of the Nativity, where he was grieved to find Father Faraud very ill, as a result of overwork and privations. For this reason and that which the reader already knows, the devoted missionary was ordered south. He had already laboured, sometimes day and night, twelve full years at Lake Athabasca. Father Clut was left to take his place.

Bishop Grandin stayed at the Nativity till July 1st. Shortly thereafter he found himself at the humble home of an old man who has become legendary among the missionaries of the great northland. This was François Beaulieu, the Patriarch of Salt River, the oldest of the French halfbreeds of the Far North, a relic of the heroic times of the discoverers and explorers, Alex. Mackenzie, John Franklin, J. Back and others. He must have been born about 1771, and was baptized in 1848 by Father Taché, after which he became a most exemplary Christian. In spite of his poverty, he built a house for the exclusive use of the priest that might happen to visit his little settlement. Father Gascon dwelt there some time, taking lessons in Chippewayan from him. The

place where the missionary said mass became sacred in the eyes of Beaulieu and family. They never inhabited it ever since, but filled it with holy pictures concealed from profane eyes by a curtain which was drawn aside on Sundays, Fridays and holidays, when an improvised service was held.

To the Indians of whom he had been elected chief, as well as to his own children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and their families, François Beaulieu was both priest and magistrate in the absence of either, and instances are on record when he filled that double rôle with the wisdom of a Solomon and the perspicacity of a theologian. Under the impulse of passion, a Christian had divorced his lawful wife and taken another. Thanks to the bishop's intervention, those unholy ties had been broken, and some time after the prelate's passage at Salt Lake, the Indian's legitimate consort was sent for. But her husband felt some scruples about taking her back without a new ceremony, which he deemed necessary. In his predicament he consulted Beaulieu, who at first was nonplussed as to what decision he should give. Then, after some moments of reflection, he delivered himself thus: "After all, if I lose what is mine, it is none the less my property even though I am not in possession of it. So it must be in the case of your wife. She is yours; take her. And to be the surer about it, we will say the beads together. That will take the place of all ceremonies."

In that little patriarchal settlement, the bishop as



FIRST MISSION HOUSE AT HAY RIVER.



usual heard numerous confessions, made four baptisms, blessed a cemetery, confirmed thirteen persons and gave holy communion to a large number, then went on to new conquests.

On the way, he met with forty-five Hudson's Bay Company men, in charge of the furs from the northern posts. He camped with them, and repeated for their benefit the ministrations by which previous parties had profited.

July 7th saw him at the Mission of St. Joseph, on Great Slave Lake, which he thus describes: "Their chapel is a room nine feet square built at the end of a hall 20 by 20, where the Indians assemble. So poor are the two fathers [Eynard and Gascon] that they cannot spare any paper to write to their superiors, and must make their baptism and marriage entries as short as possible." Many of the Indians that attended that post were absent hunting for a living, and the bishop regretted that he could not do as much for the tribe as he had wished.

On July 26th, he left for the other mission (Big Island, or Sacred Heart of Mary), on the same inland sea. His travelling was then much more comfortable than that of the missionaries he had just visited, who had often to cover distances varying from one hundred and sixty to three hundred and fifty miles on foot, loaded with their chapel and blankets. At Big Island, Bishop Grandin found himself with the Yellow-Knife Indians who were quite numerous and, as a rule, well disposed. His

work there was over by August 6th, when he embarked for the Mackenzie River.

In the near vicinity of a great rapid on that majestic stream, he took possession (August 6, 1861), in presence of the chief trader of the district, of a splendid site on which he was soon after to establish a mission dedicated to Divine Providence. This was in after years to become very important. It even saw a trading post rise up by its side.

Grandin had just received letters, some of which deeply affected his sensitive heart. One of them, couched in insulting language, was by a Protestant minister, who exulted over the invasion of the Papal States just consummated, boasted that the destruction of the Catholic establishment at Red River was an unmistakable token of Divine wrath, and predicted the early downfall of "Antichrist" (that is the Pope) and the complete overthrow of the Catholic missions in North America. Added to these insults came the news of the very serious illness of his Superior-General, Mgr. de Mazenod, who, at the time he read the letter that contained the information, had already succumbed (May 21, 1861). This was too much for the missionary bishop; he had never been strong; he now became quite sick. Yet, on the 10th of August he reached Fort Simpson, the capital of Protestantism in the north.

There he realized the blasting effects of heresy. So far the ministers had scarcely made any proselytes: their action had simply consisted in freezing

out the religious aspirations of the natives. Nevertheless even there God had His elects. Several cases of constancy in the faith, in the teeth of threats and offers of bribes, were brought to his notice. Mentioning the fact that he baptized five adults at that post, the bishop remarks in his journal: "True, this is little. Had I been a Protestant minister, I would have baptized several hundreds; but being a Catholic missionary, I strive above all to make Christians."²

August 20th he bade farewell to Fort Simpson and went up to Fort des Liards, in the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains. Father Gascon accompanied him in that trip. Omitting the incredible difficulties of an upstream course, we see him reach destination nine days after his departure. He was greeted by many cries of *marci* or "thank you" from native throats. Those Indians, though quite simple and primitive in their ways, had been somewhat spoiled by their contact with the preacher.

"What you say is true, and you seem to be the real minister of God, in the same way as the English preacher is the husband of a woman," remarked a chief. "But, you see, that preacher gives us tobacco and promises many fine things. If you were to do the same we would all pray with you."

Yet, finally all, with the exception of three that worked for the Company, preferred his teaching and were enrolled among his people, even without that incentive to "prayer," that is religion.

²*Missions*, vol. III, pp. 227, 228.

Thence Father Gascon set out for Fort Halkett, the rendezvous of the "Bad People," the name of a tribe which he found to be quite inappropriate. Other Déné bands, as wild and nomadic as ever existed under the sun, likewise profited by his ministrations.

In spite of the earliness of the season, winter was already making its appearance, and when the bishop left, September 12th, it had been snowing for three days. One day after his departure, he fell in with a band of Indians among whom he noticed the law of the sequestration of women after childbirth, common to all American aborigines, practiced with a revolting severity. He baptized the new-born, but nobody would dare approach the shelter where the mother had been relegated, for fear of the malign influences that were believed to emanate from her. When they set out to resume their incessant migrations, they would not allow a creature under such circumstances to use one of their canoes. They put a board over two which they joined as a raft, and the poor mother had to sit upon it, without touching the canoes, at the peril of her life. Direct contact with them would have portended grievous evil and rendered them unfit for service.

Bishop Grandin was hospitably received at Fort Simpson, where he stayed until the end of September. En route for Our Lady of Good Hope, he tasted all the sweets consequent on an early winter: the rivers were freezing, yet the ice was not strong

enough to be used by pedestrians, while overland the snow was too fresh to allow of comfortable snow-shoeing—supposing that such a mode of locomotion can ever be comfortable. On the 6th of October the wind became uproarious and so cold that the party had perforce to call a halt on the way. They could not any more sleep at night than paddle by daytime, unprepared as they were for winter travelling. Three days later they were at the mission, where they met Father Grollier, who was slowly dying of asthma; Father Séguin, the hunter and purveyor of the place, and Brother Kearney, who was just plastering with mud the interstices between the logs that formed their cabin.

The bishop was profoundly affected at the sight of their destitution. Their house was a residence twenty-two feet by eighteen, which did duty for a church, a parlour, dining-room, dormitory and kitchen. "The beds do not take up much room," writes the good prelate. "They are our blankets which we spread out on the floor, and which we take up every morning. In a corner of the house is a rickety ladder of Father Séguin's own manufacture. It leads to the garret where are the coffers and provisions of the mission. The former consists in a few pieces of printed calico, several dozen of cotton handkerchiefs, and some yards of cloth. In the line of provisions there is some dried meat, and salt fish, twenty pounds of flour at most and as much of pem-

mican. This is carefully concealed as something very precious.³

The few pieces of woven fabrics above mentioned were used as money to pay the Indians for services rendered. Of course, window panes would have been entirely out of place in such humble lodgings. Yet, owing to the long darkness of the Arctic winters,⁴ Brother Kearney had introduced the luxury of a few parchment skins which served as windows. In the few weeks passed at Good Hope every member of the community had his appointed task. The bishop's was the putting up of firewood for the long winter months. He also employed his evenings in taking English lessons from the Irish brother.

Unfortunately for his zeal he could see only a few Indians. But he soon noticed that they formed an unpleasant contrast with those who had enjoyed for years the advantages of a Catholic mission. The soothing influence of our holy religion had as yet scarcely penetrated those rough natures, as was made but too clear by the conduct of several families who, in accordance with their ancestral custom, had abandoned on the way old or feeble men or women, who could no more follow the band, a proceeding which was well known to mean an early death from cold and starvation. The bishop inveighed against

³*Missions de la Congrégation des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, vol. III., pp. 363, 364.

⁴Bishop Grandin writes, 15th Nov., 1861: "In less than fifteen days the sun will have disappeared from the horizon and I shall not see it any more at Good Hope, though I am not going to depart before some time in January." (*Missions*, vol. III., p. 364).

that cruel practice, and flattered himself that it would be given up, at least among those who valued the ministrations of the missionaries. He says in this connection: "We never have to deplore similar crimes in our more advanced missions."⁵

Another difficulty that confronted him was the lack of women for the young men, due to the practice but lately abolished of killing the little girls after birth.

He then expatiates in his journal on the extreme severity of the temperature, and mentions a party of five who arrived entirely disfigured, all having some part of their face frozen in spite of their precautions. He also regrets that he shall have to return without having come in contact with the Eskimos, whose characteristic vice he states to be an unconquerable propensity for thieving. He then relates that, as a Protestant minister was repairing, a year before, to the Yukon, he took away from the Catholic Indians he met their medals and crosses. But having later on fallen in with an Eskimo party, he was robbed of many of his travelling impedimenta, which those aborigines refused to return until he had given them in exchange the crosses and medals of which he had himself deprived the Catholics.

It was with the greatest difficulty that Bishop Grandin could find two men and three dogs for the sledge which was to contain his blankets and provisions for the journey to St. Theresa, or Fort Nor-

⁵*Missions*, vol. III., pp. 368, 369.

man. It was so very cold when he left on January 8, 1861! Fortunately the gentleman in charge of the fort generously came to his assistance. Here we have to acknowledge our inability to express in a few words the incredible sufferings and hardships of that voyage, which would take several pages to properly describe. To sleep in the open at forty-five to fifty degrees below zero, with two or three dogs crouching on one's person for the sake of the heat they emit, is scarcely episcopal. The prelate's costume by daytime was not more in accordance with the canons. He was dressed in long trousers of moose skin, a shirt of caribou skin with the hair inside, over which was a large blouse of moose leather. Two bags of bear skin hung from either shoulder: they were his mittens, in which he must constantly keep his hands under pain of seeing them freeze at once, while his head was covered with a skin hood passed over a fur cap.

Yet these precautions did not by any means ensure immunity from danger. One day, his companion, an Indian that preceded him on the way, having turned towards him to answer a question, suddenly seized the bishop's nose, squeezed it vigorously and pressed it in all directions, then rubbed it with snow, to the surprise of the missionary who wondered whether the cold had deprived the Indian of his reason. Soon enough he had to thank him for this apparent brusqueness: the episcopal nose was frozen, and the native's object in subjecting it to that massage was to restore circulation.

Omitting many other dangers and passing over the fatigues and unmentionable inconveniences inseparable from winter travelling in the subarctics, we arrive with our wayfarers at St. Theresa's Mission, January 21, 1862. The lodgings that await our arrival there are even more modest than those of Good Hope; but why tarry in a description of them? The poverty of the place did not prevent the bishop from remaining there till the 8th of March. He found only two Protestant Indians attending the fort, one of whom was a chief who had kept his two wives and for that reason preferred the "tolerance" of the Protestant clergyman to the rigidity of the priests.

Fasting and famishing was the order of the day for both pastor and flock. One of his men had cast off on the way from Good Hope an old pair of mocassins. A few days afterwards, an Indian family who had been a long time without eating, made a good meal on them. Worse still, an Indian killed and ate his four or five-year-old daughter who had been baptized by Father Grollier, and it was rumoured that many other parties were reduced to the same extremity.

Having departed from Fort Simpson in the company of three gentlemen, young and alert, the moral necessity the bishop was in of keeping pace with them resulted in his having his feet covered with blisters. On the third day, they were as if they had been soaking in mustard poultices. Then rheumatic

pains, with which he was quite familiar, returned, which rendered progress a veritable martyrdom for the poor missionary. To these trials ophthalmia, induced by snow-haze, added its torments, with the result that Grandin was in a state of absolute exhaustion when he entered Fort Simpson on the 17th of March.

However, two days later he had to set out again for Big Island, which he reached March 28th, for St. Joseph's Mission (April 3rd), and St. Michael's or Fort Rae (April 25th). More than once in that toilsome journeying had the poor missionary thrown himself down on the snow with the involuntary exclamation: "It's over; my course is run;" only to resume his painful trudging after some moments of rest on the cold couch provided by nature, a clear evidence, he remarks, that necessity renders man able to do a good deal more than seems at first possible.

Father Eynard had returned home just one day before the bishop's arrival. The priest was in even a worse plight than his bishop. Both his ears, his cheeks and nose were frozen. The reason of that pitiful state Grandin, in his humility, ascribes to a greater spirit of mortification, which prompted Eynard to abstain from food, in conformity with the penitential season (Lent), in spite of the many involuntary fasts all missionaries had to submit to while on the wing, or even at home.

Considering that the reader by this time must

have some idea of the life of the evangelical labourers in the great North, we might now resume our narrative of the events that transpired in north-western Canada since 1862. We shall, however, take the liberty of presenting him with an account of still another experience that fell to the lot of Bishop Grandin in the frozen wastes of the subarctics.

He was, in the summer of that year, saying his mass in the little chapel of the Nativity, Lake Athabasca, when two newcomers caused him an agreeable distraction by putting on surplices and serving him. They were Father Grouard, already mentioned, and another young priest, Father Emile Petitot, who was soon to distinguish himself by his geographical, ethnological and philological studies. In the winter of the following year, bishop and scientist were to meet again, but under very different circumstances.

It was on December 14, 1863; Mgr. Grandin was travelling on the ice of Great Slave Lake, closely preceded by some gentlemen connected with the Hudson's Bay Company. The party was not far from destination, that is, St. Joseph's Mission, when of a sudden squalls of wind made themselves felt which in a few moments acquired the proportion of a gale. At the same time, a fine snow which was falling whipped the faces of the wayfarers, and soon concealed everything from view. It was the same story over again: one of those terrible snowstorms which spell death to the unwary traveller on a plain or a large sheet of water. In spite of the snow that

obscured the sky, the ice was left quite bare by the impetuosity of the wind that swept it off, so that the bishop and his guide, a child thirteen years old, could not distinguish the tracks of their companions, and completely lost their bearings. The Indian guide of the Hudson's Bay Company men, who knew that the bishop was doomed if left alone, vainly asked them to wait for him; the bitter cold and their inexperience with northern blizzards led them to pay no heed to his remonstrances.

Bishop and child were now roving at random, simply with the object of keeping themselves from freezing. Both were soon exhausted. Tired out, stiff with cold and cut by the piercing wind they knew the consequences of inaction in the midst of such a storm; but endurance has its limits, and these were now reached by the hapless wanderers. Lying down to the leeward of his sledge while pressing the child to his bosom, the bishop made the sacrifice of his life and begged for God's mercy on both. Then, in spite of the numerous acts of contrition they had already made, he heard the confession of little Baptiste, while the child was weeping in spite of himself, and the dogs were howling under the sting of the bitter cold.

Humanly speaking, they were doomed; once asleep they would not awake, except to appear before God's tribunal. The bishop did his best to prevent the child from falling asleep, notwithstanding his own drowsiness due to fatigue and the continual whine

of the wind. The terrible situation of the little party is more easily understood than described; yet with God's special protection, both saw the light of the morrow. Early in the morning they were rescued by a party sent from the mission and the fort, and Bishop Grandin entered the chapel of the former as Father Petitot was saying mass for him, wondering whether it was not a requiem mass that he ought to celebrate.

We have mentioned the important post of Providence at Grand Rapid, on the Mackenzie. Father Gascon left, July 4, 1862, with Brother Boisramé and two Chippewayans, to go and make the very first start on its establishment. The pioneers were assailed by swarms of mosquitoes which rendered their work exceedingly painful, as if the devil, apprehending the good of which that mission was to be the instrument, had sent that additional obstacle. On the 12th Bishop Grandin arrived and his companion, Father Petitot, took Father Gascon's place as axeman and carpenter.

To return to less primitive quarters. We have noticed the departure of the Bishop of St. Boniface for Europe. The twofold object of his journey was attained. A special appeal to the eastern Canadian Catholics by their respective pastors brought in the handsome offering of £1200 for the reconstruction of his cathedral and residence; the division of his immense diocese and the consequent nomination of Father Faraud were ratified. On May 13, 1862, that

missionary became Bishop of Anemour and Vicar-Apostolic of Athabasca-Mackenzie. His consecration took place on November 30th of the same year at the hands of Archbishop Guibert, of Tours, France, the oldest of the Oblate prelates; but he spent some time preaching and lecturing with a view to gather funds for his missions, probably the most destitute in the world. Moreover, an excellent missionary was given Mgr. Taché in the person of Father André; two sisters were also sent him, who were accompanied by devoted women destined to assist them without remuneration.

Another recruit to be credited to the same voyage was the Rev. Mr. Joseph N. Ritchot, who soon took the place at St. Norbert of Father Mestre, whose alarming state of health brought about his return to France, where he died shortly after. Mr. Ritchot was the precursor of a new series of parish priests who helped Bishop Taché in making Catholic Manitoba what it is, and whose persevering efforts could not be too much praised.

Rev. Joseph Noël Ritchot was born at L'Assumption, on December 25, 1825. He commenced his studies for the priesthood when already twenty years of age and was not ordained before he was thirty, that is, on December 22, 1855. He was parish priest of Ste. Agathe des Monts when, in May, 1862, the Bishop of St. Boniface persuaded him to leave for the west.

Another sign of progress was the departure from

St. Boniface, July 8, 1862, of Father Maisonneuve with three nuns, named respectively Gunette, Damais and Tisseur, for the mission of Lac la Biche, of which the ladies were to found the first convent, while an Oblate brother was establishing an English school at Edmonton.

The sisters reached destination August 26, 1862. In the Far North a new worker was emulating Father Grollier and doing wonders of zeal and self-abnegation, too often with but indifferent success. A Protestant minister, Mr. Kirkby, had just (spring of 1862) crossed the Rocky Mountains into the Yukon Territory. Father Séguin tried to neutralize his action on the Loucheux Indians of Peel River and the western slope of the Rockies. But the struggle was very unequal; the English clergyman had resources which Séguin did not possess, and of which he would not have made use had they been at his command. Now the Loucheux were exceedingly fond of tobacco; they likewise appreciated the value of good English tea, and did not spurn the pieces of wearing apparel offered them by the preacher of the "pure Gospel." At Peel River they had already seen Father Grollier and taken kindly to the Catholic teachings and ministrations. Nevertheless they thought nothing of assisting at the minister's distributions of tobacco, a circumstance which gave him the momentary illusion of conversions *en masse*. When told that, after accepting his bounties, they had practically all gone to

enjoy them with the Catholic missionary, Kirkby was indignant and left for La Pierre House, on the west side of the northern Rockies, where he thought himself, with some appearance of reason, sure of all the Indians who knew him already and had never seen a Catholic priest. But Séguin followed him there, arriving with him at that trading post on June 17, 1862.

Both preachers and traders endeavoured to ostracize Father Séguin who, at first, had quite a number of Indians at his service, but saw their ranks gradually thin out in proportion as both his opponents were generous with those that listened to the Englishman. The head trader went so far as to threaten never to give or sell any tobacco to such as would continue to show their preferences for Catholicism. As to the preacher, he stooped to the grossest calumnies against the priests and even against the saintly Bishop Grandin.* The practical result was that the Loucheux realized the divine mission of the Catholic missionaries, but as a rule had not the courage to refuse the bounties of the Protestant clergyman and trader.

From La Pierre House Father Séguin returned to Good Hope, which he did not reach before having experienced untold hardships and mishaps through the Rocky Mountains. Yet the poor father was no sooner home again (August 2nd) than he received

*He did not blush to say that Father Grollier (who was then preparing for death) had a wife, that Séguin had several, and that Bishop Grandin was no better (*Missions*, vol. V., p. 250).

a letter from Mgr. Grandin who ordered him to Fort Yukon itself, where Kirkby had already spread his usual calumnies against the priests in the course of two visits. A new Anglican minister, a halfbreed by the name of Robert Macdonald, was repairing thither, and, being a single man, he was thought more dangerous than his married colleague.

Séguin reached Fort Yukon on September 23, 1862, and as the head of the post (which the Russians claimed was on their territory) was so far away from the headquarters of the Mackenzie district, the poor missionary was treated with very scant courtesy. He soon perceived that Kirkby's preaching and slandering had not been in vain. Moreover, a French Canadian halfbreed, who had turned Protestant because of the reproof he knew was merited at the hands of the Catholic priests for his most scandalous conduct,⁷ used all his influence with his relations and others among the natives to keep the Loucheux away from the priest.

Yet Father Séguin had to pass the winter in the enemy's camp, a winter unhallowed by any spiritual consolations. He set out for his return east on June 3, 1863, and, after thirty-five days of extremely painful travelling through mountain gorges, across torrents whose icy waters he had constantly to ford, sometimes at the risk of his life, he reached Good Hope on July 14th. His eleven months of isolation had been all the more felt as their bitterness had not been tempered by the least success.

⁷He was openly living in the state of bigamy.

CHAPTER XX.

ONE MORE BISHOP.

1864-1866.

Things were brighter at Red River. On his return to St. Boniface, Bishop Taché set upon building up again what fire had destroyed. He commenced by the erection of a stone vestry forty by thirty, which at first did duty as a church. It was occupied on All Saints' Day, 1862. On November 4th the remains of Mgr. Provencher, which were found well preserved, were, after a solemn requiem service, deposited in a vault prepared on the site of the new cathedral.

The very first work on this was done in the winter of 1862-63, when Mr. Thibault with his halfbreeds of St. François-Xavier cut and sawed in the vicinity of Ste. Anne des Chênes the lumber destined for the framework of the roof. The masonry work was commenced in the spring of 1863 and was actively pursued till the following fall, when the bare walls, ceiling and roofing were finished. The new edifice was smaller than the one it replaced, and those who had seen the generous proportions and, for the country, magnificence of the former cathedral could not help imitating the ancients of Israel in their regrets, when they compared the new temple with the old. These regrets were intensified by the sight of the



NORTHERN DÉNÉ BOYS.



unfinished state in which the new building had to be left for a long time, owing to the lack of funds.

In the beginning of 1864, the foundations of the new episcopal residence were laid, and in April of the following year the "palace" was inhabited by a large number of Oblates.

One who could not profit by Bishop Taché's hospitality, but had gone to dwell in a much more splendid palace, was the intrepid Father Grollier, the Apostle of the Arctic Circle. Ever since 1861 that pioneer had been suffering agonies due to asthma and his inability to counteract on the spot Protestant proselytism. When, in 1862, his indomitable energy took him from Good Hope to Fort Norman, his progress had been that of an invalid scarcely able to walk a few hundred yards without being out of breath. For two years longer he dragged on a miserable existence, unwilling to leave his neophytes for the south, whither his superiors suggested he should go, and teaching them by word and deed practically to his very last day. Reclining on a buffalo robe spread on the floor of his humble cabin, he was asked whether anything could be done to alleviate his sufferings or help him out in any way; to which he had answered that he thought a little milk and a potato might do him some good. But neither milk nor potatoes were to be had; no doctor or remedy of any kind was available in the poor northern mission, and on June 4, 1864, Grollier expired, contented in spite of his penury, and fortified

by the sacraments of Holy Church, after having given directions that his remains be deposited between the last two Indians buried in his cemetery.

He was in the prime of life, barely thirty-eight years of age, and was the very first priest to die of a natural death within the immense territory falling within the scope of his work.¹

The great event of 1864 for the diocese of St. Boniface was the canonical visitation of the Oblate missions by Father Vandenberghe. That gentleman had been sent by the Right Rev. Father Fabre, the new Superior-General of the Order, and arrived at Red River May 22nd. He was agreeably surprised to see the honourable position the Church occupied there in the estimation of all classes. On June 4th he took passage on one of the Hudson's Bay Company's boats bound for Methy Portage, where he was met by Bishop Grandin, who had just completed his three years' voyage of inspection of which we have presented the first part to the reader. It was some time afterwards that the young prelate re-

¹Rev. Pierre Henri Grollier was born at Montpellier, in the south of France, 30th March, 1826. He was studying philosophy when he resolved to enter the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and pronounced his vows on the 12th of Oct., 1848. He was ordained priest by Bishop de Mazenod 29th June, 1851. We have already remarked that his great zeal on behalf of Catholic interests made him *persona non grata* to many of the traders. That there were honourable exceptions is shown by the following passage of a letter addressed by one of them to Bishop Grandin (14th Jan., 1865): "I have learned with sincere regret of the premature death of Rev. Father Grollier. Whatever may have been his relations with others, I must confess that I have always found him a pleasant companion, full of zeal for the accomplishment of his duties, and a firm advocate of the Company's interests among the Indians."

ceived from one of the most prominent among the northern officers of the Company a letter which so visibly reflects the impression made on fair-minded Protestants by the devotedness of the missionary that we feel it our duty to reproduce it here almost in its entirety. Though the writer of that communication must have obtained only glimpses of Grandin's exertions in the north, that document will amply suffice to convince the reader that our own sketch of his labours and hardships is far from overdrawn.

“The reception of your esteemed letter of July 24th ult., did not cause me more satisfaction than the news of your happy return after a long residence in the north, where, as I saw it with my own eyes, you gloriously followed in the wake of your illustrious prototype St. Paul, working with your own hands and preaching faithfully, in season and out of season, the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the heathen. The noble abnegation, the calm, the admirable energy with which you underwent hardships, overcame obstacles and endured sufferings of an exceptional nature are beyond all praise. For my own part, though I have passed some fifteen years in those wild regions, though I saw and experienced personally several of the vicissitudes of life in the Far North, I should shrink from sufferings and privations so prolonged, so many and so continuous as Your Lordship endured on the banks of the Mackenzie. If your far-away friends had seen you as I did, in a *palace* made of shapeless logs super-

posed on one another, to the height of seven feet, lighted only by coarse pieces of parchment doing duty for window panes; having nothing but the frozen ground for a floor, and for a door a few ill-joined boards which snow and wind penetrate every moment; for a bed a few pieces of wood on trestles; for staple food aliments which the least of the servants in beautiful France would have spurned to touch; your long and painful voyages, often in a state of semi-starvation; having for companions only savages who know nothing of the habits or feelings inspired by European civilization; surely those friends of yours would have shed tears of emotion at your unhappy fate. I know that your extraordinary patience and your unalterable courage have excited the admiration of all the officers of the district, without mentioning the affection and esteem which the personal qualities of Your Lordship have inspired to all classes of people along the Mackenzie River.'"²²

When in spite of religious animosities, Protestants were so enthusiastic in their praise of the work accomplished by the Catholic missionaries, it can easily be imagined that one of their own brethren, as was Father Vandenberghe, must not have been slow in appreciating the intensity of their zeal any more than the excellence of its results. From Methy Portage the visitor went to Ile à la Crosse where he was joined by Mgr. Taché. The prelate had taken

²²14th July, 1865.

another route in order to inspect himself localities which Father Vandenberghe would not have time to visit. This plan, however, resulted in some delay, and the latter had been a month at Ile à la Crosse when the prelate reached there. With the visitor were six Oblates, namely two bishops, two priests, and two lay brothers.

After some more time spent at that mission, the representative of the Superior-General visited in succession Cold Lake, Lac la Biche, St. Albert, Edmonton and Fort Carlton, returning to St. Boniface by way of Duck Bay, where he was met by Father Simonet, of St. Laurent, the new mission on the south end of Lake Manitoba, which replaced Notre Dame du Lac and the earlier Duck Bay post of Mr. Darveau. At the latter place the bishop confirmed twenty-two persons, a circumstance that goes to show that the persevering efforts of the new missionaries had at last obtained tangible results among the naturally obdurate Santeux.*

The prelate and the Oblate official reached St. Boniface together on February 23, 1865. They were greeted by the sweet notes of three bells which had arrived for the cathedral during the visitor's journey of over eight months. That gentleman found Father Lestanc at the head of the Oblates of St. Boniface and acting as administrator of the diocese during the absence of its Ordinary, while Father Végreville had been the director of the college.

*It must, however, be remarked that several of those Christians were French-Santeux halfbreeds.

Father Vandenberghe no sooner finished his work after the visitation of two missions on the American side of the frontier, than Bishop Faraud was received (May 24, 1865) at St. Boniface, with his caravan of prospective missionaries comprising Fathers Genin, Tissier and Leduc, with Brothers Lalican, Hand and Mooney. After three weeks passed in the intimacy of Bishop Taché and brother Oblates at the episcopal residence, Mgr. Faraud left, June 13th, with Father Genin and Brother Boisramé, who had been recruiting; his health shattered by overwork in the Far North. The prélate reached Ile à la Crosse on July 25th, and was delighted to meet Bishop Grandin, who had done so much for the Indians of the territory that was now Mgr. Faraud's vicariate-apostolic.

The height of land which formed the famous Methy Portage was the dividing line between the diocese of St. Boniface, of which Mgr. of Satala remained the coadjutor bishop, and the new domains of Mgr. Faraud. There the latter received the abjuration of a young Scotchman, and on August 15th he passed a few hours with Father Clut at his old mission of the Nativity (Lake Athabasca).

But henceforth his residence must be farther north, at the Providence Mission lately established by Bishop Grandin. On, therefore, he went visiting Fathers Eynard and Gascon at St. Joseph's, Great Slave Lake, as he made for his new headquarters, where he was welcomed, August 23rd, by

Father Grouard and Brother Alexis. Still, most important business urges him on. By order of the Holy See he must visit the remotest of his posts and take, as it were, a sort of plebiscite on a question dear to his heart.

Bishop Faraud had scarcely been consecrated when the thought of his ever recurring infirmities—acute rheumatic pains—filled him with misgivings as to his ability to discharge unaided the duties of his new station. The increasing activity of Protestantism in the north rendered that inability to cope with all the difficulties even more apparent. A consultation with his Superior-General at Paris resulted in a name being chosen for the approbation of Rome, which was formally begged to grant the new vicar-apostolic a coadjutor. Pius IX. had graciously ordered that bulls be prepared in compliance with those prayers; but the favour had been conceded subject to a condition which is as unusual under the circumstances as it is uncommon for Rome to give an auxiliary to a bishop who has not even entered on the exercise of his functions. This was that all the priests under Bishop Faraud must be consulted, and give their assent to that measure before it could be consummated.

And so on went the consulting prelate. After two days of downstream navigation he landed at Fort Simpson, where he concluded the exercises of a retreat to numerous Indians. September 2nd saw him again on the waters of the gigantic Mackenzie, and

five days later he was kneeling in the chapel of Our Lady of Good Hope.

There Fathers Séguin and Petitot, with Brother Kearney and a large number of Indians, greeted their new Ordinary. After a visit to the grave of Father Grollier, the prelate was much gratified to learn that, since the demise of the devoted missionary, the Hare Indians realizing how good he had been to them, had experienced a change of heart that bode well for the future of the mission. They had previously been rather remiss in conforming their conduct to his teachings; but now it could literally be said of him as of Abel of old that "he being dead yet he speaketh."⁴

On September 14, 1865, the itinerant prelate left the tomb of the martyr to duty and set out again for Providence. His progress was now slow, not only because he had to ascend the river, but owing also to sickness which prostrated his crew. Left to themselves the bishop and Brother Boisramé had to do all the work, in addition to nursing the sick. They took a wrong direction, thereby uselessly prolonging their course. On October 5th, they were at Fort Simpson after twenty-three days of terrible exertions and anxieties, and, on the 13th of the same month, they reached their destination, Providence Mission.

It was there, in the newest missionary station of the Far North, that an event was to take place which

⁴Heb. xi. 4.

was fraught with momentous consequences for the missions of the new vicariate-apostolic. With one exception all the priests had been consulted on the expediency of granting a coadjutor to Bishop Farraud, and without a single dissentient voice, they had concurred in the necessity of the proposed step. The one exception was the appointee to the position himself, that is Rev. Father Clut. That missionary had scarcely had time to see his new bishop, who had passed but one hour at Lake Athabasca. Yet the interests of his mission demanded a full consultation with him. Hence, December 12th, Father Clut got his sledge and dogs in readiness, donned his snowshoes and off he was, accompanied by a single Indian, a half-blind invalid. He pressed on and on, pausing at St. Joseph's for the Christmas festivities, and, after a march of thirty-eight or forty days in a temperature 40° to 50° below zero, he reached Providence with Father Eynard, who had accompanied him from St. Joseph's.

Handwritten signature of Bishop Clut

BISHOP CLUT'S SIGNATURE.

There were now eight Oblates at that mission; in presence of all Mgr. Farraud proclaimed, January 3, 1866, Clut's nomination as Bishop of Erindel *in partibus infidelium* and coadjutor to the Vicar-Apostolic of Athabasca-Mackenzie.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONFLICTS AND DANGERS.

1866-1868.

Meantime the Indians among whom Mgr. Clut was to exercise his new functions were decimated by scarlet fever and the missionaries had become both doctors and nurses to their stricken flocks. In spite of their efforts to save the sick fully forty-five died in a short time at Fort Simpson and perhaps more in the near vicinity.

That post was more than ever the battleground for the two hostile camps, the Catholic faith on the one hand and the schism of Henry VIII., with its ever changing doctrines, on the other. Little by little the former was losing ground owing to the fact that its accredited representatives could not establish themselves permanently there, while the Protestant clergyman, with the open connivance of the traders, high and low, no less than by means of the gifts which English generosity allowed him to lavish on the proselytes, was destroying during over eleven months of the year what the priests had done during the few days of their visit to the post.

Between the two conflicting creeds too many of the natives, though naturally religious, remained hesitating and almost skeptical. They kept on their

old ways of cannibalism in times of distress, and continued to abandon to certain death the old and infirm when travelling. The officers of the powerful corporation that enjoyed a practically undisputed monopoly over the fur trade in the north generally showed themselves polite and even hospitable to the Catholic missionary; but what could the poor half-starved Indians do when, after the departure of their spiritual guides, they were faced with the prospect of seeing the traders show them the cold shoulder unless they abandoned the priest for the preacher? When alone with the former they strenuously protested that in him only did they believe; but in several cases this faith was not strong enough to render them proof against the allurements held out by the champions of heresy. Let us hasten to add, however, that within the valley of the Mackenzie the great majority of the Indians remained faithful to the "men of God," the "true Praying Ones," in preference to the "husbands of women," as they termed the ministers.

And no wonder, for just then the Catholic missionaries were vying with one another in zeal for the good cause. Father Grollier's place was advantageously taken by Fathers Séguin and Petitot who, having already mastered the language of their people, were constantly on the move looking for the lost sheep. The voyages and missionary experiences of the latter were afterwards to form five or six volumes, which we must with regret deny ourselves the

pleasure of even analyzing. In one of his journeys, made by the end of 1865, he was snowshoeing for over six consecutive weeks, and he traversed on the ice not less than three hundred and thirty-six lakes of all dimensions, sixty-eight of which he crossed twice. He regenerated in the waters of baptism hundreds and hundreds of children, with quite a number of adults, mostly among the old and infirm.

The following year saw him hail with inexpressible satisfaction the frozen plains under which reposed, in its hibernal sleep, the inland sea known as the Great Bear Lake. This was on March 15, 1866, and he was the very first minister of religion to work on the shores of the hyperborean body of water. The establishment of Fort Norman, several times mentioned in this work, had been transferred thither from the valley of the Mackenzie, and with it the Mission of St. Theresa, which so far had been scarcely more than a name.

Unfortunately the satisfaction of evangelizing new Indians in hitherto unknown fields was, a month later, offset by the arrival of still another Anglican clergyman, the Rev. William Carpenter Bompas. This was the first educated minister to penetrate into the northern wilds with the intention of staying there—the others included ex-brewers, school teachers and catechists. Mr. Bompas proved no less active than the other representatives of Protestantism in the Far North and, being abler, he was soon recognized as an adversary to be reckoned with.

In view of the prominence to which he was to be brought by after events, it may not be uninteresting to quote the description Petitot gives of him in one of his letters: "He is endowed with an angelical mien, a celestial look, a voice that seems honeyed and cooing, and also an innate science. He reads the Bible in the Greek, and burns with an ardent zeal, being persuaded that he has received the special mission of withdrawing the poor Indians from the clutches of the priests. So far the natives do not mind him, because he has arrived without his baggage; but behold, he is to receive in a few months ten or twelve bales of goods and one box of remedies weighing 120 pounds. That, more than his Greek or his cloth, is likely to turn the heads of our redskins, if the Almighty or the Blessed Virgin do not help us."¹

As if to illustrate the truth of the Scriptural saying that "the life of man upon earth is a warfare,"² the same difficulties which beset the missionaries in the Far North were confronting their brethren struggling for the true faith on the vast prairies of the Canadian West. Scarlet fever was there replaced by smallpox, and the aggressiveness of Protestantism was no less marked, though perhaps less successful, because it had for object Indians less amenable to views different from those of their own ancestors. There also the soldiers of the Cross were

¹*Missions*, vol. VII., p. 295.

²Job, vii. 1.

surpassing themselves in their efforts on behalf of the true faith. To mention but one, Father Lacombe reproduced on the plains the wonders of self-abnegation accomplished in the northern wastes by Father Petitot and others. In common with the latter, Lacombe had especially endeared himself to the roving hordes of Crees and Blackfeet by his assiduity in unravelling the mysteries of their so complex dialects.

The venerable Mr. Thibault, who was still in the diocese of St. Boniface, had written after an experience of several years among the prairie Crees: "When the last buffalo shall be dead, then we will be in a position to attempt something on behalf of the Plains Indians." Father Lacombe's zeal could not accommodate itself to such delay. He must make the children of unbridled liberty bow their proud heads under the yoke of Christ. He had received from the Rev. Father visitor (1865) the mission of following out those nomadic tribes wherever they went, and, difficult as it was, that mission was too much in accordance with his own wishes not to be gratefully accepted by the devoted priest.

From St. Albert, therefore, he set out for the boundless plains which, at this time, had nowhere been forced by artificial means into contributing towards the sustenance of man. He had already befriended many of the native chiefs; they received him with open arms, though they did not manifest such an enthusiasm for conforming their lives to his

teachings. He thus accompanied the Blood Indians to whom he taught prayers and hymns of his own composition. Then he joined himself to the Blackfeet proper, and very soon he could realize the dangers consequent on his mission.

For economic reasons a branch of that nation had divided itself into three groups respectively of forty-five, fifty and sixty tepees. The missionary was the guest of the smallest, and on the night of December 4, 1865, he was resting in the chief's lodge after a hard day's work, when *Natus* (the Sun) sprang up, gun in hand, and, in a particularly lugubrious tone, sang out:

"*Assinaw! Assinaw! The Crees! The Crees!*"

He had scarcely pronounced these words when a terrible detonation spread alarm and confusion in his camp, while bullets commenced to pierce every tepee, but more particularly the largest one where Lacombe was resting. The Blackfeet are brave Indians. The chief immediately rushed out of his home with his family and addressed his people exhorting them to sell their lives as dear as possible. The first volley had broken two of the supporting poles of his tepee, and the enemy must have been quite near, for, at the same time, the burning wad of two muskets had fallen at the feet of the missionary.

Father Lacombe got up, put on his cassock, kissed his Oblate crucifix and, making the sacrifice of his life, went out with his baptizing outfit to look for persons in need of his ministry. Right and left the

bullets whizzed in a night the darkness of which was relieved only by the flashes from the muskets; here and there the voices of the chiefs strove to rise above the din of the battle; men sang out their various war songs; the women bewailed their fate, and the children gave vent to their despair, while the horses neighed and the dogs howled through fear. Altogether it was a most terrible scene. The position of the party attacked was all the more critical, as most of their men had left two days before on a hunting expedition.

Vainly did the fearless missionary endeavour to attract the attention of the enemy, telling of his presence among the Blackfeet; he could not make himself heard. The first victim of the aggressors was a young woman who had received a bullet in the forehead. At her request the priest baptized her, and she died. A few minutes later a Cree scalped her, and slew her babe whom Lacombe had overlooked in the dark. The enemy captured twenty-five tepees with all their contents, including the priest's own belongings. An Assiniboine had just appropriated his breviary, when a Blackfoot laid him low with the contents of his gun. He was immediately scalped, while the missionary was recovering his own book.

Meanwhile the warriors of the other Blackfeet camps, warned of the affair by the fusillade, had come to the assistance of their friends. Yet the battle was not on that account discontinued, as the

aggressors were at least a thousand strong. Three times did they charge the apparently doomed camp, only to be repulsed with considerable loss.

What a long night it seemed to the poor missionary! Finally the dawn of the 5th of December was whitening the horizon when the priest donned his surplice and stole; then cross in hand, he advanced towards the enemy, cautioning at the same time the Blackfeet to cease firing. But fog and the smoke of the battle prevented the Crees from seeing him. Whereupon his friends, fearing for his safety, urged him to come back. Just then a bullet, striking the ground, ricocheted to his shoulder, and thence to his forehead, leaving half-stunned the unsuccessful truce-maker. The battle did not stop till ten in the morning, when a Blackfoot having succeeded in conveying the intelligence that the priest had been wounded, the Crees retired, protesting that they did not know of his presence among their foes.

Twelve Blackfeet had been killed, and fifteen wounded, three of whom could not recover, while at least two hundred horses had been captured or slain. On the side of the Crees ten men had lost their lives and fifty were wounded, several mortally.

Such were the charms of missionary work on the plains, at least when that work was not accomplished in the perfunctory way and with the safeguards proper to other parties.

Another danger which the same Father Lacombe had braved that very year was that of contagion. As

we have already mentioned, smallpox had broken out in 1865 among the Plains Indians, making twelve hundred victims among the Blackfeet alone. The missionary flew from camp to camp, and urged Crees and Blackfeet alike not to remain any longer deaf to the voice of God, who was punishing them for

A. Lacombe om

FATHER LACOMBE'S SIGNATURE.

their obduracy. His efforts were not without results. But he almost succumbed himself to a violent dysentery he contracted among the Crees, and when he recovered his appetite after a period of fasting, he had nothing else to satisfy the cravings of nature than a soup made of straps of untanned leather and pulverized parchment.³

Yet the work of God was advancing apace, notwithstanding the obstacles that rose in its way. In the spring of 1866, the Rev. Mr. Ritchot, parish priest of St. Norbert, went to put up the first buildings of a mission which Mgr. Taché proposed to establish in a valley whose natural advantages he had long admired. This was the origin of the mission of Qu'Appelle, the material part of which was brought to completion by the same priest in the spring of the following year. In the summer of

³Letter from Bishop Grandin, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, XLI., p. 292.



REV. FATHER A. LACOMBE, O.M.I.



1868, Father Decorby, fresh from France, installed himself in the new residence, where the Oblates have ever since done successful work for the education, no less than the evangelization, of the natives.

From July to September, of 1866, Bishop Taché was absent in eastern Canada, where he secured the services of some more Grey Nuns, not to mention a new recruit to his clergy, the Rev. George Dugas, who reached St. Boniface, October 13, 1866, with the bishop and another priest, Rev. Joachim Albert Allard. Dugas was at once entrusted with the care of the college, and with the aid of Father Allard he soon instilled a new lease of vigour into that institution, resuming a classical course, which has never since been interrupted. Mr. Dugas remained in the ranks, as yet very thin, of the secular clergy; but Father Allard at once commenced his novitiate, and on November 4, 1867, was admitted into the Congregation of the Oblates.

Meantime God's servants were sorely tried at Ile à la Crosse, where Mgr. Grandin was residing in the rare moments left him after the visits of his missions. March 1, 1867, the entire establishment became the prey of the flames. All was lost in the conflagration. In spite of the bitter cold, not a blanket remained for either the fathers, the sisters, the old people under their care, or the orphans that were brought up by the nuns. Nothing was left to the grief-stricken missionaries and their devoted auxil-

iaries, not even a handkerchief wherewith to wipe away their tears.*

Farther north, an event of a very different character was, a few months later, rejoicing the heart of Mgr. Faraud: we refer to the consecration at Lake Athabasca of his coadjutor, Mgr. Clut. This took place on August 15, 1867, at the hands of the vicar-apostolic himself, assisted, by special permission, by Fathers Tissier and Eynard.

Another auspicious occurrence was the eleventh Chapter-General of the Oblates, at Autun, France. It lasted from August 5, 1867, to the 17th of the same month, with Bishops Taché and Grandin as members, and was one of the most important in the whole series of Oblate chapters. One of its results, as far as the missions of the Canadian West were concerned, was the further division of the diocese of St. Boniface, which was decreed by the General Administration of the Order and provisionally approved at Rome, which, however, left to an ulterior epoch the realization of the plan considered from a purely ecclesiastical standpoint. In virtue of that arrangement, Bishop Grandin was, shortly after the chapter, named by the General of the Oblates, Vicar of the Saskatchewan Missions, with jurisdiction distinct from that of Mgr. Taché in matters pertaining to the Oblates as religious or regular clergy.

*Letter from Mgr. Grandin, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, 4th Jan., 1868.

The new vicariate of missions⁵ comprised the basins of the Saskatchewan and of English River, with the valley of the Athabasca, as far as Lesser Slave Lake inclusively. It counted within its territory the missions, first of St. John the Baptist (Ile à la Crosse), where resided two priests with three lay brothers and as many Grey nuns in charge of a school for girls and an orphanage for boys; second, St. Peter, on the northern shore of Lake Caribou, six hundred miles east of Ile à la Crosse, in the hands of two priests and one lay brother, with fourteen hundred Indians as parishioners; third, Ste. Anne on the lake of the same name, in the Far West, a mission which had seen better days, but was still the home of seven or eight hundred halfbreeds, very good Christians, as a rule; fourth, St. Albert, the seat of the new vicar of missions, which, since March 20, 1863, enjoyed the services of the three nuns who had commenced their labours at Ste. Anne. These sisters had schools for the children, and two priests, with a few brothers, had the direction of the establishment. Fifth, there was, moreover, Our Lady of Victories, at Lac la Biche, with two fathers and three sisters. Lastly there was a sixth post established by Father Lacombe in May, 1865, on the banks of the Saskatchewan. This was called St. Paul of the Crees, and had two resident priests. Each of these missionary stations had moreover a

⁵A circumscription proper to a religious or monastic organization, quite different from a vicariate-apostolic, which is created by the Pope and almost enjoys the rights of a full-fledged diocese.

certain number of outposts which were periodically visited by one of the fathers.

But the new vicar of missions could not immediately assume the supervision of those different posts. The season was too far advanced for him to reach his headquarters before the winter; he therefore stayed in France a few months after the chapter, employing himself in preaching and lecturing with a view to getting resources in men and money for his missions. He was highly successful, and returned to Canada not only with many boxes of goods therefor, but with five priests, two lay brothers and three or four postulant lay brothers. The priests were Fathers Légeard, Dupin, Fourmond, Doucet and Blanchet.

This apostolic caravan hailed the Red River with its saintly leader in the beginning of July; 1868. In addition to these precious recruits, all of whom were to persevere in their chosen field of labour, we should mention a no less valuable newcomer in the person of J. M. Camper, who had, two years before (October 13, 1865), come from France and joined the phalanx of evangelical labourers in the diocese of St. Boniface. He had immediately been stationed at St. Laurent, on Lake Manitoba, with Brother Mulvihill, who arrived a year later (December, 1867). The latter had accompanied Fathers Laity and De Kérangué, who were destined for the difficult missions of the Mackenzie.

As to the Ordinary of St. Boniface himself, he

felt the need of secular priests for the sedentary posts he intended to establish among his halfbreeds. With a view to recruiting some, his trusted friend, Mr. Ritchot, passed the winter of 1867-68 in eastern Canada. But when he returned to St. Boniface, July 7, 1868, he was accompanied by only one, Rev. Mr. L. Raymond Giroux, who was at once appointed professor of philosophy in the college, and missionary priest to St. Vital and Ste. Anne des Chênes, which he regularly visited once a week and once a month respectively.

As a result of the foregoing, we may state, by way of recapitulation, that in the fall of 1868 the Church was represented between Lake Superior and the Rocky Mountains, on the one hand, and from the American boundary to the North Pole, on the other, by four bishops (Taché, Grandin, Faraud and Clut, all Oblates), five secular priests, namely, Rev. Messrs. Thibault, Ritchot, Dugas, Kavanagh^e and Giroux, and no less than thirty-two Oblate missionaries, aided by a score or more of lay brothers. It counted moreover seven establishments of Grey Nuns, who taught school, brought up orphans, and kept asylums for the old and infirm. The work of the late Bishop Provencher was indeed progressing.

^eThen acting as assistant to Vicar-General Thibault at St. François-Xavier.

APPENDIX A.

AS TO THE TIME OF THE LAKE OF THE WOODS MASSACRE.

In his valuable work on "The Search for the Western Sea" Lawrence J. Burpee has it (p. 245) that "an early start was made from the fort, and when they stopped for breakfast they had reached an island off what is now known as Oak Point." He then proceeds to mention the massacre there of the whole band, remarking by way of comment: "How the Sioux managed to surprise such a large party of experienced *voyageurs* can only be conjectured." We would be prepared to share the author's implied astonishment if we could be made to believe that the massacre took place in broad daylight as Burpee would have it. But we fail to find any authority for such a surmise in all the contemporaneous documents at our disposal. We believe we have consulted all the available sources of information dating from the period of the French explorations in Western Canada—Lavérendrye's memoirs, letters and journals, as well as those of De Beauharnois—and we repeat that we cannot find anything that would warrant Burpee's inference that the massacre took place in the morning.

That author evidently derived his data on this point from the published notes of Father Félix Martin, S.J., who says that "the explorers had reached the Lake of the Woods, and had landed on an island for the morning meal," when they were attacked by Sioux that had been prowling about ("The Aulneau Collection," p. 90). Where Father Martin got his information is more than we can say; but personally we have no doubt that he is mistaken. That priest wrote some thirty-five years ago, at a time when the researches made within the last few years had not yielded the wealth of contemporary documents now in our possession.

In the first place, he makes Father Aulneau come to Canada in 1730 instead of 1734, and says that he went west

six years later, that is, in 1736 instead of 1735. Then his notes on the subject are so worded that the inference comes naturally to the mind of the reader that the discoverer himself, the elder Lavérendrye, not his son, was in the party that fell on Massacre Island and that this party just hailed from the east, instead of coming from Fort St. Charles, in the west. Lastly, Father Martin plainly states that "some sought safety in flight only to perish in the waves," an assertion which is not borne out by subsequent happenings. On the 19th of September, 1736, the Sieur de Lavérendrye sent, according to his own memoir, "a sergéant with six men to take up the bodies of Rev. Father Aulneau and of [his] son." He then adds: "I have buried them in the chapel with *all* the heads of the French who have been slain." The discovery of Fort St. Charles (see Appendix B) has confirmed this statement, and the skulls of *all* the French voyageurs have lately come to light.

Furthermore, two considerations based on the ways of the voyageurs and the Indians combine to disprove the assertion that the Lake of the Woods massacre took place in the morning. In the first place we have the well-known cowardice and treachery of the American aborigines. It is inconceivable that the Sioux should have attacked and annihilated a body of twenty-one armed white men who could not help being aware of their approach if assailed by daylight. And then Lavérendrye is positive on the fact that the island on which they were massacred was seven leagues, or about twenty-one miles, from Fort St. Charles. Once on the way, voyageurs generally rose early and often covered some distance before breakfasting. But they were just as slow in leaving an inhabited place. Hence it is absolutely against all likelihood that Lavérendrye's men should have departed from their fort without eating and gone twenty-one miles before taking their first meal. Such a feat could scarcely be put to the credit of men who, as Father Martin wrongly supposes, were nearing the end of a long voyage: it is utterly incredible of voyageurs who merely started on an important journey.

APPENDIX B.

THE DISCOVERY OF FORT ST. CHARLES.

In the course of the long years that elapsed after the tragedy which we have related, even the very identity of the spots connected therewith had become so doubtful that when, shortly after his accession to the See of St. Boniface, Most Rev. L. P. A. Langevin, O.M.I., endeavoured to trace them out in an irrefragable manner, he met at first with great difficulties and temporary failure. Massacre Island was known to the local Indians as a spot to be shunned, though exactly for what reason they could not say, and the exact location of the slaying of Father Aulneau and companions is still a matter of conjecture. As to the site of Fort St. Charles, wherein they found a final interment, it had become a problem involved in deep mystery.

But this very circumstance only stimulated the new archbishop to leave no stone unturned until he had found it, and with it all that was left of the pioneer missionary and explorers. To this effect he organized and defrayed the expenses of a searching expedition composed of himself, Rev. J. B. Baudin, O.M.I., parish priest of Kenora, on the Lake of the Woods; Rev. Jos. Blain, S.J., of St. Boniface College; Revs. Chas. Cahill, O.M.I., Thibaudeau, O.M.I.; Rev. Mr. A. Béliveau, secretary to His Grace, and the Hon. Judge L. A. Prud'homme, to whom history owes much for the light he has shed on the French origins of the Canadian West.

Most of the members of the expedition left Winnipeg for the Lake of the Woods on September 1, 1902. Thanks to his knowledge of the native language, Father Cahill easily secured for the party the services of two Indian chiefs, who told him of the ruins of very old chimneys they had seen in their youth on the shores of a long inlet on the west side of the lake, a little to the west of Buckete Island and a promontory known as American point. After some

search, one of the chiefs called Powassin was not a little disconcerted at his failure to locate the stone mound which he had not seen for many years. Despairing of success, the exploring party had even embarked for their return home, when Father Thibaudeau, who had tarried in the bush and long grass of the shore, cried out that he had found something. On examination it was ascertained that the remnants of an old fireplace, square stones so laid as to form three sides of a quadrangle, attested the existence in the long ago of a chimney, and consequently of a building, which, in a first moment of enthusiasm, was proclaimed to have been the much wanted Fort St. Charles. Confidence in the traditions of the natives was thereby revived, and the excursionists left the place with the intention of completing the discovery at some future date.

In August, 1905, the same spot, as well as Massacre Island, were revisited by another party, headed by His Grace of St. Boniface and composed of five Oblates, one Jesuit, Judge Prud'homme and others. Some additional mounds were found and probed without leading to any serious results. Two years later, a similar expedition, formed of a like personnel, completed what was then believed to be the discovery of the fort by means of examinations, excavations and measurements which put in evidence the ruins of three chimneys, with a few metal objects such as a file, some nails and the blade of a knife.

These results, gratifying as they were, did not entirely satisfy Fathers Paquin, Cahill and others, as the nature of the soil and the general topography of the place did not seem to warrant the possibility in that locality of a palisaded post such as Fort St. Charles was known to have been. In the meantime, the enthusiasm which Mgr. Langevin had infused in the members of the various expeditions had led Judge Prud'homme to delve into the archives of the Paris Ministry of Marine, wherein valuable documents bearing on the real location of the establishment were found.

On July 10, 1908, another party, composed this time of Jesuits of St. Boniface College, repaired to the site already explored, armed with Prud'homme's documents, maps and the account of the labours of the previous expeditions, the

members of which had, as early as September 4, 1902, constituted themselves into the Historical Society of St. Boniface, now duly incorporated for the Province of Manitoba.

So far all the researches had been made on the north side of the inlet. One of the party, Rev. Father Paquin, having become incapacitated for work as a result of an accident, he utilized his enforced leisure in perusing the literature bearing on the subject. He then fell on the following passages of Judge Prud'homme's account of the 1902 expedition, which pointed to information furnished by Chief Powassin: "On the south shore, opposite the place where you have just planted a cross, there are also three chimneys"; and again: "These lay close to the shore in a small cove, amid a grove of aspens, a little to the west of the site on the north shore."

Having induced his companions to try that spot, Father Paquin was delighted to see them bring to light a mound of large stones, hidden from view by a heavy growth of good-sized trees, which attested the presence there, in years long past, of a large fireplace. Then, as a result of a methodical examination, two other smaller hearths were discovered, together with a number of metal objects. Next, a heap of human bones was unearthed north of the large fireplace, which could be made to form a dozen skeletons, evidently brought there for interment long after death. All the skulls were missing. The decayed remnants of the fort palisade were then located in the ground, which made the identity of the site a matter of certainty.

This much was accomplished in July, 1908. On August 5th of the same year, a new party composed of Rev. Mr. Béliveau, Judge Prud'homme, Fathers Blain, S.J., and Paquin, S.J., with three brothers of the same Society, made their way to the now undisputed Fort St. Charles. After one day of futile search the chapel of the establishment was located, and, to the inexpressible joy of the band of explorers, a large number of human skulls were unearthed. To quote Father Paquin ("The Discovery of the Relics of the Rev. J. P. Aulneau, S.J.," p. 499): "They were arranged in two double rows, lying in the clay under about two feet of earth, in a good state of preservation, with rootlets grown through the cavities of the eyes, ears,

and nose. They were duly counted and there were nineteen; one had an arrow point firmly imbedded in the lower jaw, and another arrow point was found loose in another skull."

On the third and fourth days of excavating, three skeletons were brought to light, of which one was that of a child, now partly obliterated. These proved to be the remains of Indians buried there without a coffin.

At last, in the most northerly part of the chapel site, the spade came in contact with the pulverized remnants of what had been a wooden box four feet by two "enclosing two skeletons lying side by side on the back, and without the skulls. . . . Both were cramped into such a small space that the bodies must have been in an advanced state of decomposition when placed in the box in which they were buried," a circumstance which tallies entirely with what we know of the death and burial of Aulneau and Lavérendrye. With one of the skeletons were found two keys, and, between the two, a pocket knife or razor. Three small arrow points were also resting on the vertebral column of the other, and toward its feet were found a bunch of five keys, a shoe buckle such as worn by ecclesiastics in France, and fourteen beads of a rosary. But what completed the identification of those remains was a deep cut, made seemingly by a dull-edged implement, which was observed in the sacrum of one of the skeletons, making it as incontestable that the bones of this were those of Lavérendrye's son as it was sure that those of the other were Father Aulneau's.

All the finds resulting from those expeditions are now treasured in St. Boniface College.

APPENDIX C.

THE RED RIVER VOYAGEUR.

By John G. Whittier.

Out and in the river is winding
The links of its long red chain,
Through belts of dusky pine land
And gusty leagues of plain.

Only at times a smoky wreath
With the drifting cloud-rack joins—
The smoke of the hunting lodges
Of the wild Assiniboines.

Drearily blows the north wind,
From the land of ice and snow;
The eyes that look are uneasy,
And heavy the hands that row.

And with one foot on the water
And one upon the shore,
The Angel's shadow gives warning—
That day shall be no more.

Is it the clang of the wild geese?
Is it the Indians' yell
That lends to the voice of the north wind
The tones of a far-off bell?

The voyageur smiles as he listens
To the sound that grows apace;
Well he knows the vesper ringing
Of the bells of St. Boniface.

The bells of the Roman Mission
That call from their turrets twain
To the boatman on the river,
To the hunter on the plain.

Even so in our mortal journey
The bitter north winds blow;
And thus upon Life's Red River
Our hearts, as oarsmen, row.

Happy is he who heareth
The signal of his release
In the bells of the Holy City,
The chimes of eternal peace.

HISTORY
OF THE
Catholic Church
IN WESTERN CANADA

From Lake Superior to the Pacific
(1659-1895)

BY

THE REV. A. G. MORICE, O.M.I.

Member of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba; of the
Société Historique de Saint-Boniface; the Art, Historical and
Scientific Association of Vancouver; the Natural
History Society of British Columbia; the
Philological Society of Paris, etc.

Author of "The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia";
Dictionnaire Historique des Canadiens et des Métis Français
de l'Ouest; *Aux Sources de l'Histoire Manitobaine*;
Au Pays de l'Ours Noir; "Notes on the
Western Dénés," etc.

With Maps and Illustrations



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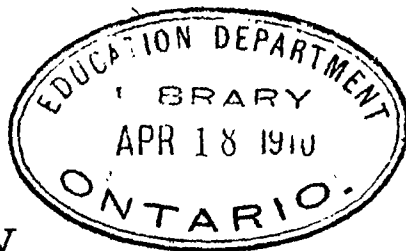
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PART IV

The Red River Troubles

CHAPTER XXII.

CAUSES AND LEGITIMACY OF THE RED RIVER INSURRECTION.

1860-1869.

It is not without misgivings that the historian of the Catholic Church in Western Canada comes upon the years 1869-70. Everyone knows the trite saying that history is a conspiracy against truth. We doubt if there is a period in the whole past of man in America to which that remark can be more appropriately applied. Hence, in order to reproduce the events of those troubled times with the complexion that is really theirs, we must run counter to the fables and fabrication, the groundless surmises and misrepresentations which racial and religious prejudices have so far given as the expression of truth in nearly all English works.

While we firmly propose to continue in our rôle of dispassionate historian, we run the risk of being accused of partizanship simply because our knowledge of the real facts, their causes and effects, bids

us keep clear of the slanders, gratuitous innuendoes and erroneous assertions with which English-speaking readers have hitherto been regaled.¹ It were more pleasant to dismiss with a few words as irrelevant to our subject the troubles that agitated the little world of Red River in 1869-70, and very nearly had the most serious consequences for Canada and even the British Empire. But we cannot without forfeiting our claim to truthfulness and honesty conceal the fact that Catholics were the mainspring of the whole movement, and we will admit without the least difficulty that in this they had the sympathy of their clergy. Hence we feel bound to delineate, though as briefly as possible, consistent with intelligibility, the principal phases of that movement which prejudice and an unreasoning disposition of mind would fain represent as a rebellion. We only regret that the scope of our work, religious rather than profane history, dictates to us a reserve which must perforce militate against the complete understanding of the events we are about to narrate, and must likewise prevent us from revealing the wealth of proofs and corroborative statements at our command.²

And lest we might be suspected of partiality, we shall in this and the next chapters adhere to our

¹Let it be understood once for all that, as we have made of that particular question an exhaustive study, we are in a position to substantiate every one of our statements.

²*Deo volente* and health permitting, we may later on write a full history of the Red River Insurrection.

policy of quoting in support of our assertions only from Protestant and official authorities.

At the time we have now reached, the population of Red River was 11,500, very sharply divided into two sections: French or Catholic, and English, generally Protestant, the former slightly predominating in numbers. Yet, as the immense majority was of mixed blood, and the halfbreeds, whether English or French, realized their close relationship on their mothers' side no less than the equality of their social condition, perfect harmony reigned between the two sections. They had now practically rallied round the truly patriarchal rule of the Hudson's Bay Company represented by the Council of Assiniboia, as the Company had since 1849 abandoned its monopolistic ideas, and the governing body which was so closely affiliated with it sinned certainly more by an excess of leniency than by an excessive severity. It was an open secret that the law-abiding dispositions of the settlers had more to do with the peace and order reigning in the colony than any show of coercive power on the part of its rulers.

Unfortunately, some restless minds hailing from the Province of Ontario had, ever since 1860, striven to sow the seeds of discord and discontent, founding a newspaper, the *Nor'wester*, whose chief mission seems to have been to revile the Hudson's Bay Company and represent to outsiders the people of Red River as groaning under its yoke. The leader of the malcontents, all strangers to the country they

decried, was a Dr. John Christian Schultz, a young physician who owned for some time the colony's paper and endeavoured to create in Ontario a movement of emigration to the Red River, with the avowed object of upsetting the institutions and the social conditions prevailing there.

So little did he care for legality and order that, on one occasion, he publicly defied the authorities of the colony, and had himself liberated by a rabble of his followers from the jail, where he had been incarcerated (1866). In 1867 his efforts resulted in a score of Ontarians coming west, which naturally rendered him even bolder.

Meanwhile the new Dominion of Canada coveted Assiniboia and the whole Northwest. For let not the reader lose sight of this all important fact: at that time Assiniboia (to-day Manitoba) was politically an entirely distinct country from Canada. Both were on a footing of equality: different colonies depending from the Imperial Government at London. Yet as the Dominion was desirous of extending her frontiers westward, she treated with the Hudson's Bay Company with a view to buying out her charter rights to that country, without in the least minding what its inhabitants would think of the transaction. It was agreed that Assiniboia and the Northwest would be turned over to Canada for a consideration of £300,000 sterling, which was to be paid the Company on the day of the proposed transfer, that is, the first of December, 1869.

Bearing in mind the arrogance of the handful of men who represented themselves as the forerunners and special friends of the Canadians who were to rule over this new part of the Dominion, the population, both English and French, found it extremely surprising that they should not be consulted on the advisability of their being made over to a power whose agents were acting as their worst enemies.³ In the summer of 1868, articles which appeared in a Montreal paper told the Easterners of the mistake that was being made; but those warnings remained unheeded. Bishop Taché himself verbally represented to Sir George Cartier, one of the two foremost members of the Ottawa cabinet, that elementary prudence demanded that an experienced man should be sent to Red River to study the question. But His Lordship was told that he did not understand politics.

The prelate did not insist, for just then his mind was engrossed with other problems. As a result of innumerable swarms of grasshoppers that fell on the land, everything of a vegetable nature had been eaten up in the Red River valley (1868). By July there was not an ounce of provisions to be sold in the whole colony. In this extremity the United States came to the assistance of the people with a sum of money (£900); Ontario promised more but gave less, while the Hudson's Bay Company did

³The Ottawa authorities had represented the country as peopled only by a few tribes of Indians and some free traders and trappers.

more than both combined, donating to the relief fund upwards of six thousand pounds. On the other hand, the Governor and Council of Assiniboia voted the sum of £250 especially for the Catholics threatened with famine, and as a result of special collections in the churches of the archdiocese of Quebec \$3,200 was sent to the Bishop of St. Boniface, to which were added various other sums contributed by the Bishop of Montreal and other prelates. Mgr. Taché was greatly consoled by those generous alms, and thanked the donors in a letter dated January 16, 1869.

As to the Federal Government, they took advantage of the distress in Red River to force their agents upon the country. In the fall of 1868, they sent two gentlemen, Messrs. John A. Snow and Charles Mair, to make a wagon road from Oak Point to the Lake of the Woods. The Governor of Assiniboia, Mr. William McTavish, protested immediately against the intrusion of the representatives of another power into his own territory; but Canada, who knew perfectly well that it had no rights whatever in that colony, did not heed the representations of the western governor. Its agents went on with the work, paying in provisions valuated at exorbitant prices the work of the men they employed.

"The latter was a writer of no mean order, who, "after having received the hospitality of many families, saw fit to ridicule in public print those who had entertained him" (Begg, "The Creation of Manitoba," p. 17). "Mr. Snow was fined ten pounds for having given liquor to the Indians." (*Ibid.*, *ibid.*)

This created dissatisfaction, but was nothing compared with what was to follow. Several of the officials, after having intoxicated the Indians, made them sign deeds whereby most valuable tracts of land in and around Oak Point, on which French half-breeds were already settled, and to which the said Indians had no manner of right, were surrendered to the strangers from Ontario. Dr. George Bryce himself cannot help admitting in a work which is chiefly remarkable for the evidences of anti-Catholic feelings it contains, that "the evidently selfish and grasping spirit shown in this expedition sent to survey and build the Dawson Road,⁵ yet turning aside to claim unoccupied lands, to sow the seeds of doubt and suspicion in the minds of a people hitherto secluded from the world, was most unpatriotic and dangerous. It cannot be denied, in addition, that the course of a few prominent leaders, who had made an illegitimate use of the *Nor'wester* newspaper, had tended to keep the community in a state of alienation and turmoil."⁶

Contemporary authors and Protestants put on their oath are agreed that those strangers did not confine their covetousness to "unoccupied" lands.⁷ Moreover, those parties were constantly hinting at

⁵So called from having been built in accordance with the 1859 survey of J. S. Dawson, to whom we have already referred.

⁶"History of the Hudson's Bay Company," pp. 458, 459.

⁷See, for instance, Begg's "The Creation of Manitoba," p. 21; Andrew G. B. Bannatyne, in "Rep. Select Com.," Ottawa, 1874, p. 123; John H. McTavish, *ibid.*, p. 1.

the eviction of the rightful owners of the land, which would result as a matter of course from the transaction under consideration at London. "It is a well-known fact that the man who professed to be the leader of the party openly declared that the half-breeds of Red River would have to give way before Canadians, and that the country would never succeed until they were displaced altogether."⁸ The half-breeds who, through their mothers, had the very best title to the land and were passionately attached thereto, were to be ousted, and might esteem themselves fortunate if the forthcoming Ontarians would condescend to retain them as cart-drivers.

No wonder, therefore, if the secretary of the Council of Assiniboia should have later on declared on oath that "it was very generally believed or apprehended among the people generally, but to a greater extent among the French halfbreeds, that the whole country would be appropriated or monopolized by the newcomers."⁹ "I myself shared that apprehension," he adds. And one of the most prominent gentlemen employed at Fort Garry likewise remarked in his own sworn testimony: "The English also felt that the surveys were improper," because conducted on land not belonging to the government by whose orders they were made, and also because they affected estates already occupied.¹⁰

⁸Begg, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁹"Rep. Sel. Com.," p. 115.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, John H. McTavish, p. 1.

While the public mind was thus disturbed, it was learned that, though Canada had as yet no jurisdiction over Assiniboia, she had named to rule it a governor in the person of the Hon. William McDougall, the Ottawa Minister of Public Works, who was known to be unfriendly to the French Catholics and who "held frequent communication with the leader of the so-called 'Canadian Party.'"¹¹ The identity of his views with those of the "arrogant exponents of Canadian policy in Red River,"¹² was soon confirmed by the appointment of Col. John Stoughton Dennis, who "arrived with a staff of surveyors to divide and subdivide the land into sections as they saw fit."¹³ All these strangers now fell victims to a perfect land fever. They staked out for themselves and friends in Ontario what pleased them of the best lands, and their leader appropriated enough "to make him one of the largest landed proprietors in the Dominion,"¹⁴ had he been allowed to take possession of it. Finally, it began to look as if no man's property was safe.¹⁵

Now we might ask any fair-minded reader: Is not the right of property one of the most sacred privileges of a free manhood? To put the question is tantamount to answering it. That right is so inalienable that even a legitimate government must

¹¹Begg, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁵*Op. cit.*, p. 26.

recognize it, so that the people of Red River would have been warranted in resisting forcibly the ruthless expropriation of their land by their own government. When that expropriation is attempted by an outside government which has absolutely no jurisdiction over them, the right of resistance is doubly clear.

Of this the Catholic halfbreeds, with many of their Protestant brethren,¹⁶ were convinced. One of their chief religious advisers, Rev. Mr. Ritchot, of St. Norbert, was not of a different opinion, especially as among the threats uttered by the Ontarians in Assiniboia, several referred clearly to the destruction of those religious rights which Catholics had so far enjoyed.

Fortunately for the cause of the inhabitants of the colony, English and French, there was then at St. Vital a man who, in spite of his youth and consequent shortcomings, was to prove able to cope with the difficulty. This was Louis Riel, the eldest son of the tribune of 1849. Born at St. Boniface, October 22, 1844, of Louis J. Riel, a halfbreed,¹⁷ and Julie Lagimodière, the daughter, by a French Canadian, of the very first white woman who had the courage

¹⁶While feeling strongly on the question, the English halfbreeds being threatened neither in their language nor in their religion, their objections to Ottawa rule could not reasonably be as strong as with the Métis, against whom the threats of the Ontarians were especially directed.

¹⁷According to well-informed Lord Wolseley, Louis Riel "was born of French-Canadian parents," and "he had not a drop of Indian blood in him." ("The Red River Expedition," p. 213, in *Blackwood Magazine*, vol. I).

to settle (1807) in what was then the wild West,¹⁸ he had been sent east, in 1858, by Mgr. Taché, who thought he might have a vocation to the priesthood, and made his classical studies in the College of Montreal.

*With the humble & respectful
Louis Riel*

LOUIS RIEL'S SIGNATURE.

He had commenced his philosophy course when the death of his father (January 21, 1864), and his lack of aptitudes for the ecclesiastical state, caused his return to the west. There he was a witness to the outrages and threats already mentioned, and gradually, though only twenty-five years old, he was drawn by the vortex of events into taking the lead in the movement of protestation against the encroachments of Ottawa.

Before proceeding with an outline of the measures which were taken to resist those encroachments and force the Federal authorities to acknowledge the rights of the Assiniboians of both origins, we must be allowed to examine a question which is being constantly raised by ignorance and prejudice. The Red River insurrection has very commonly been styled a rebellion by English authors. This accusation is

¹⁸Marie Anne Gaboury, born 6th Nov., 1782, at Maskinongé, P.Q.; died in the neighbourhood of St. Boniface at the age of ninety-six.

simply preposterous, nay, perfectly ridiculous, in the eyes of such as are familiar with history, and have not abdicated all claims to be regarded as endowed with the faculty of reasoning. There never was a rebellion at Red River.¹⁰ For against whom did the halfbreeds and the whites rise? Against the Government of Ottawa, such as represented by their agents, Schultz and Bown and Dennis and McDougall. But what right had that government to the colony of Assiniboia? Absolutely none until the 15th of July, 1870, when, in virtue of a formal transfer effected by the Imperial authorities, after Ottawa had expressly consented to do what she should have thought of before sending any agents west (that is, guarantee the rights of the colonists), Assiniboia became part of the Dominion under the name of Manitoba.

Before that date Assiniboia was with regard to Canada in the same position as Newfoundland is to-day, with this aggravating circumstance that over one-half of her population differed in language and religion from that part of Canada, Ontario, which insisted on the acquisition of the western territories. This is so evident that the Colonial-Secretary, Lord Granville, plainly admitted in a letter to Father Lestanc, the rights of the halfbreeds to refuse to enter the Confederation. Moreover, the very fact that, owing to the objections of the latter, the date of

¹⁰Except that of the Canadians against the Government the country had, with scarcely a dissenting voice, momentarily given itself.

the transfer of their country to Canada was changed at London from the 1st of December, 1869, to the 15th of July of the following year, is clear evidence that they were perfectly justified in declining to play into the hands of the Ottawa politicians.

The reader must not lose sight of this all-important fact, if he wishes to be in a position to judge sanely what was to follow. It is a fact that the most bigoted anti-Catholic cannot deny, and which ought to shame him into refraining from using in connection with the Red River troubles a word which is in itself a slander.

There would have been a rebellion if Riel and his friends had ever renounced their allegiance to the British Crown. But, in spite of the most violent hatred and unfounded prejudices which his very name has long sufficed to evoke among a certain class of Canadians, it is now proved without the shadow of a doubt, and admitted by all fair-minded Protestants who are at all conversant with the question, that Riel ever was and remained to the last favourable to the British connection. Great were the inducements offered him by Americans²⁰ to falter in his allegiance, but he would not hear of any proposals the acceptance of which would have made

²⁰ "Outside of the Fenian associations, the Provisional Government of Red River repudiated offers that might have seduced its members, had the sentiment of allegiance not prevailed; sums of money amounting to more than four millions of dollars (\$4,000,000), men and arms, had been offered, and the whole was refused by these 'rebels.' " (Archbishop Taché, in a letter to His Excellency the Governor-General of Canada, Hamilton, 23rd July, 1870, "N. W. Committee Evidence," p. 42).

him traitor to his Sovereign. We might remark that his loyalty was all the more commendable, as he had constantly to struggle with one of his own associates, O'Donoghue, whom the wish to secure the good-will of the Irish portion of the population had led him to admit into his administration in spite of his anti-British proclivities.²¹ Nay, we will even see in our next chapter that Canadians must probably thank Riel and his halfbreeds for the fact that all the territory west of the Lake of the Woods is to-day part of their country.

Owing to an unfortunate occurrence which raised anti-Catholic passions to the boiling point, most of

²¹A perhaps more weighty reason for keeping O'Donoghue in his administration may be found in the fact that the young Irishman had uncommon aptitudes for bookkeeping and all that pertains to the duties of an accountant. In an unpublished memoir on the troubles of 1869-70, Rev. Mr. L. Raymond Giroux, one of the priests stationed at St. Boniface at the time, has the following: "Mr. Riel, who had at heart the British connection, was one day complaining to me that O'Donoghue was striving to give the movement an annexationist complexion. But, he said, I am in absolute need of him; he administers his department with care, and treats exceedingly well the halfbreeds, of whom he has become the idol."

William B. O'Donoghue was first met (June, 1868) by Bishop Grandin and Mr. Giroux, at Port Huron, Michigan, as the prelate and his companions were proceeding to Red River. The young man having offered his services for the western missions, he became a member of the little caravan. At St. Boniface he was appointed Professor of Mathematics in the college, and commenced at the same time his own studies with a view to entering the ecclesiastical state. Mr. Giroux avers that he was an able man, well grounded in his faith, of temperate habits, and an excellent professor. Our informant feels indignant at the epithet of "scoundrel" given him by "ignorant Dr. Bryce," adding: "He was a gentleman in the strictest meaning of the term." For our own part, we cannot help remarking that, in view of his avowed anti-British sentiments, he was, to say the least, in an anomalous position when he served in a government that professed an undivided allegiance to the Queen. It would have been more honourable for him to step out, or at least keep his political preferences for himself.

the English writers can scarcely have a kind word for Louis Riel. Nevertheless, even his greatest enemies could not help acknowledging his fidelity to the British institutions, a fact which is all the more significant as his well-known impulsiveness and excitable dispositions might, in the face of the many provocations from those who seemed to claim a monopoly of loyalty, have betrayed him into imprudent acts or words, had he not been so firmly grounded in his pro-British sentiments.

A few passages from the official documents of the time will amply corroborate our assertions. Under date, December 16, 1869, Mr. (afterwards Sir) John A. Macdonald, admitted in his "Report of a Committee of the Honourable the Privy Council" that the resistance of the halfbreeds (and consequently of their leader as well) "is evidently not against the sovereignty of Her Majesty or the government of the Hudson's Bay Company, but to the assumption of the government by Canada."²² Can any proof of our contention be stronger than this confession of him who, with Sir George Cartier, had been the chief, though involuntary, cause of the whole trouble? But three days earlier, Mr. Wm. McDougall himself admitted this loyalty in a letter he wrote to Riel, wherein he said: "As the representative of the Sovereign,"²³ to whom you and they [the

²²Correspondence relative to the Recent Disturbances in the Red River Settlement," p. 53. London, 1870.

²³He speaks of himself, though he was never invested with that function.

halfbreeds] owe, and, as I am told, do not wish to deny allegiance, it is proper that some such communication should reach me."²⁴

This trust in Riel's pro-British sentiments was based on the reports of spies the would-be governor was keeping among the disaffected halfbreeds. Such were the loyal sentiments of the latter that on December 6, 1869, the same party wrote to the Secretary of State at Ottawa that the production of his own spurious proclamation (wherein he claimed to have received from the Queen authority that was never delegated to him) "had a most tranquillizing effect. Riel said: 'This puts a different face on the matter,' and, as my informant says, 'expressed much loyalty.' He appealed to the English delegates (some of whom still remained in his convention, to watch his proceedings) to help him *peacefully* get their rights."²⁵ The italics are McDougall's himself.

That this attachment to the British connection was persevered in is shown by a dispatch from the Governor of Canada to Earl Granville. That high official wired to the Colonial Secretary: "The latest news from Red River is that a convention, half French, half English, met on January 25th. Riel opened the proceedings with a loyal speech."²⁶ This was dated February 15, 1870.

In case the reader should require additional evi-

²⁴ "Correspondence," etc., p. 72.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

dence of Riel's sympathies for British institutions, here is a passage from the sworn deposition of a prominent English-speaking and Protestant Assiniboian, Mr. Bannatyne, which refers to a period, late in the history of the Red River troubles, when the halfbreed leader was beset by a crowd of Americans bent on bringing him over to their own political aspirations: "At the time of the publication of the *New Nation*,²⁷ it was altogether American. I heard from Riel that he would never work for annexation to the States. I saw Mr. Coldwell, who was connected with the paper, and told him that Riel had told me that the next issue would be stronger than the previous one, but that it would be the last. Mr. Coldwell said that if he could do that he was an abler man than he believed him; immediately after, the editor was put out of place, and another editor put in, and the tone of the paper was changed. Riel said he was willing to take assistance from all quarters; but as soon as he was strong enough, he would repudiate the American element. I know that Stutzman [a pro-American agitator] came down from Pembina about this time, and shortly after was sent away by Riel on short notice."²⁸

Useless to add to the foregoing any further remark than this: Riel's loyalty to the British Crown was so intense that, later on, when he had been proscribed as a criminal and a premium had been

²⁷The paper of the local Government.

²⁸'Preliminary Investigation,' etc., p. 73.

placed on his head by the Government of Ontario, which had then no more jurisdiction over Manitoba than Canada had in 1869 over Assiniboia; when the fate of the new province and the Northwest was in his hands, he had only to join with his sympathizers, the Fenian invaders of that territory, who had counted on his coöperation for the success of their cause, to see the entire Northwest pass into the hands of the Americans. Nevertheless he manfully forgot the wrongs heaped upon his devoted head, and offered his services to the representative of the Crown, thereby rendering abortive efforts which, though secretly abetted by powerful influences, could not succeed without the assistance of the French population.

Two points are therefore established beyond the possibility of cavil; firstly, the people of Assiniboia had excellent reasons for rising in 1869, and, secondly, their rising was not a rebellion against legitimate authority, but a protestation against the invasion of their rights by strangers, which circumstances rendered necessary.

We might add a third corollary from a careful digest of contemporary writings and the sworn depositions of English-speaking and non-Catholic personages then living in Assiniboia. Had it not been for the action of their clergy, who "were friendly to the Canadian Government," the English portion of the population "might have joined the French, and might have led to an easier solution of the diffi-

culty."²⁹ This is so true that when superhuman efforts were made to cause them to rise against their compatriots; when Colonel Dennis commenced trying to arm the people in opposition to the French, took "possession of Lower Fort Garry, enlisted a number of Indians with their chief," he "failed in getting the old settlers to join him, and left in disgust."³⁰

This sworn assertion of Bannatyne's (which is but a concise presentation of what is now an uncontested historical fact) is further strengthened, were this necessary, by the letter which two representative English halfbreeds published in denial of statements contained in the same Colonel Dennis' report to his master, Mr. Wm. McDougall. Nothing could better express the profound distrust entertained for the strangers from Ontario by the entire population of Assiniboia, and implicitly show how both English and French were a unit in the question of obtaining their rights by peaceful means. Here is the document in its entirety:

"We beg, through the medium of your journal [the *New Nation*] to declare to the public, in the most emphatic terms, that this assertion of our having counselled an appeal to arms is a downright falsehood. If Col. Dennis has the smallest particle of sound brains, he must remember that we, on the contrary, pressed upon him, in the clearest and most

²⁹"Preliminary Investigation," deposition of Thomas Bunn, ex-Secretary of the Council of Assiniboia, p. 116.

³⁰A. G. B. Bannatyne in same, p. 124.

express words, to abandon the idea of an appeal to arms, advising him moreover, that a resort to arms would be nothing but madness, and insisting upon his leaving the Settlement forthwith and remaining quiet. Though always inclined to give hospitality to strangers, and though we had already done so to Col. Dennis, under other circumstances, we feel ourselves bound at this juncture to refuse him hospitality, knowing his hare-brained design. We halfbreeds feel it very keenly that strangers, after having endeavoured to bring ruin on our country, should try to blacken our character before the public by attributing to us acts and intentions of which they themselves alone are guilty."⁸¹

Having thus cleared the way of all possible misapprehensions as to the real character of the Red River insurrection of 1869, we will now proceed to give a short résumé of the principal phases of the same, and state candidly the part the Catholic Church took in the measures intended as a protest against the encroachments of Ottawa and as a bid for negotiations therewith, remarking, by way of preface, that Bishop Taché, as well as Bishop Clut, had left for the Œcumenical Council of the Vatican in the course of 1869, after the former had confided to Father Lestanc the care of his diocese.

⁸¹Begg, "The Creation of Manitoba," p. 141. This volume, by a writer who was intimately connected with the events he narrates, is so full of damaging statements concerning the part played by the representatives of Canada, that it is now exceedingly rare, as a result, it is plainly hinted, of a campaign of suppression by the friends of those who are exposed therein.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BEGINNING OF THE RED RIVER INSURRECTION.

1869-1870.

A writer who has become famous for the lightness of heart with which he makes unwarranted assertions against the good name of honourable parties whose views differ from his, and advances in explanation of facts he cannot understand surmises based on his own prejudices; a man who is chiefly remarkable for the imperturbable serenity with which he contemplates the affidavits and sworn depositions of eye-witnesses in rebuttal of statements which he nevertheless continues to consider as the expression of truth; that man gives as one of the chief causes of the 1869 outbreak "a dangerous religious element in the country—ecclesiastics from old France—who had no love for Britain, no love for Canada, no love for any country, no love for society, no love for peace."

After this hysterical outburst, he is so exercised at the thought of the deleterious influence of those men, that he sees priests in persons who were not even in minor orders, and adds: "These plotters were in close association with the halfbreeds, dic-

tated their policy and freely mingled with the rebels."¹

Had we not already devoted so much space to the causes and real nature of the outbreak, we might tarry in a refutation of those charges, which nobody but such as are unfamiliar with the personality of their author will take seriously. Moreover, as this work is one of history, not of polemics, before letting the events speak for themselves—events which we shall relate not after the luminous exposition of the same given on oath by Bishop Taché, but, as is our wont, after official documents and Protestant testimony—we shall content ourselves with remarking that, of the three French priests at St. Boniface during the troubles, Fathers Lestanc, Maisonneuve and Tissot, only the first named had anything to do with the population, while the two other ecclesiastics, Messrs. Dugas and Giroux, were Canadians and

"*History of the Hudson's Bay Company*," by George Bryce, pp. 460, 461. The foregoing was written before that author's last popular work on the Settlement of Lord Selkirk's Colonists appeared. It is only fair to remark that, while in one paragraph of that book Dr. Bryce still insinuates the same unwarranted charges, he is now careful to abstain from any definite statement impeaching the representatives of the Church. He even manages to write calmly of Riel and his supporters, though he continues to call them rebels, regarding as "loyal" the few French halfbreeds who did not side with him. Loyal to whom? Loyal to what? To the British Crown? But Riel was more so than anybody, since he rejected very tempting offers to throw off the British "yoke," a meritorious act the like of which cannot be put to the credit of any of his opponents. Loyal to the Government of Assiniboia? But this had abdicated all power through its representative, who advised the Red River settlers to speedily form some Government, while the Hudson's Bay Company had no more any charter right to the country. Loyal to Canada? But Canada had as yet no right to Assiniboia, as is conceded by everybody. Verily, there are historical blunders, represented by foundationless catchwords, that die hard.

strongly pro-British in their sentiments. We leave it to any unprejudiced reader to decide upon the epithet which should characterize the description of kindly and scrupulous Père Lestanc unblushingly given by the Winnipeg author. "No love for any country, no love for society, no love for peace"; this could scarcely be said of an anarchist!

We may say that Father Lestanc was never a *persona grata* with Riel, and on that account he preferred sending Mr. Giroux to act as chaplain to the halfbreed garrison at Fort Garry.²

The French population had been for some time listening to the threats of the Ontarians, and sullenly witnessing their surveyors running their lines across their lands. They said little, but thought a good deal, unbosoming themselves of their suppressed feelings in private talks and secret meetings, when they came to the conclusion that things had gone far enough, and a stop must be put to the impudence of the strangers. Consequently, on October 11, 1869, Louis Riel, with seventeen unarmed sympathizers, prevented a Mr. Webb from proceeding with his survey by stepping on his chain and ordering him away.

This having been reported to Webb's superior, Col. Dennis, the matter was laid before Dr. William

²"Riel never consulted me, neither before nor after his deeds. For my part, I seldom went to Fort Garry. I do not remember having had an interview with Riel alone, save on the day of Scott's execution, about half an hour before the execution" (Fr. Lestanc in letter to Mgr. Langevin, 18th Feb., 1909).

Cowan, a justice of the peace at Fort Garry, who summoned Riel to appear before himself and a brother magistrate, Roger Goulet. But the half-breed declared in no uncertain terms that "the Canadian Government had no right to make surveys in the territory without the express permission of the people in the Settlement,"³ and refused to allow said surveys to be resumed. They then took him before Governor McTavish, with a like result, and, as a last resort, Dr. Cowan approached the administrator of the diocese, Father Lestanc, requesting him to use his influence towards bringing about the cessation of Riel's obstruction. But the priest declined to interfere, because, he said, he "had heard too much concerning the surveyors, who treated the halfbreeds like dogs, did not respect their rights, destroyed their property and threatened them."⁴ He declared that his intention was to remain absolutely neutral, instead of compromising by an ill-advised intervention the influence of the clergy which might prove useful under different circumstances. "Let the Canadian Government convince them that their rights shall not be interfered

³Blue Book of 1869-70, p. 6.

⁴From a public lecture given at Calgary by Father Lestanc, March 4, 1909. In a previous interview with Col. Dennis himself, who had called on that "plotter priest, the dastard Lestanc," as Bryce elegantly styles him, the humble priest had readily consented to do the colonel's bidding. Then the extreme imprudence of opposing the public feeling, after such unwarranted provocations, was pointed out to him, and this led him to the conclusion that he should not interfere in any way. (See Dugas, *Le Mouvement des Métis*, pp. 49-52).

with," he added, "and the Métis will of themselves go for Mr. McDougall and triumphantly bring him here."²

On the other hand, as it was noised abroad that said would-be governor, Wm. McDougall, was nearing the American frontier, preceded on the way by cases of rifles and ammunition for his partizans, Riel, with two scores of men, erected a barrier on the highway from Pembina, near the spot where stands to-day the Sale River bridge, in the parish of St. Norbert, which he caused to be guarded by a force of armed halfbreeds.

Then, in conformity with the immemorial custom of the country in cases of national importance, a committee was formed to deliberate on the situation, with a John Bruce as president and Louis Riel as secretary. This measure was considered all the more necessary as, in addition to the well-founded rumour that arms were being introduced in the colony for no other purpose than that of attacking the malcontents, it was now declared by a spy of Schultz (a Walton Hyman, whose name the Blue Book intentionally suppresses) that many of the Easterners in Assiniboia were soldiers in disguise, who had secreted their uniforms in their new homes.

This intelligence resulted in Mr. McDougall being forbidden (October 21st) to enter the territory without the authorization of the "National Commit-

²From the unpublished memoirs of Rev. Mr. Giroux, who was present at the interview.

tee of the Red River Halfbreeds." Whereupon Col. Dennis made a tour of the English in the Settlement, in the hope of causing them to rise in behalf of the contemplated order of things; but "he found that fifty men could not be collected for the purpose of bringing in Governor McDougall."⁶ Therefore the lawful governor, Mr. Wm. McTavish, wrote McDougall (October 30th), in the name of himself and council, that he "should remain at Pembina, and await the issue of conciliatory negotiations."

Yet McDougall's agent, Col. Dennis, dispatched a portion of his men to Portage la Prairie, then a hot-bed of plotters against the French population, and where but a short time before an attempt had been made at creating a commonwealth independent from the jurisdiction of Assiniboia. Dennis' object was to have those men in readiness for an emergency which was expected in the near future.

As McDougall could not proceed to Fort Garry, he sent thither his secretary, J. A. N. Provencher, a nephew of the first Bishop of St. Boniface. But that gentleman was stopped at St. Norbert and escorted back to Pembina, just as another of McDougall's friends, a doughty Capt. Cameron, was undergoing a similar check at the barrier in spite of his imperious command that the guards put down "that blawsted fence" (November 1st). Then, to prevent the forces which were known to be recruited

⁶Begg, "The Creation of Manitoba," p. 37.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 41.

by the Canadian party from availing themselves of the strong walls and cannon of Fort Garry, thereby blasting all hopes of redress, Riel occupied it (November 2nd) with some sixty men, whose numbers were afterwards increased as occasion required.⁸

Three days later friends of McDougall in Winnipeg sent him a communication which is full of significance as regards the aims of the movement. They wrote: "The Hudson's Bay Company . . . are evidently with the rebels, and their present rôle is to prevent your having any official intercourse with them. It is said that the rebels will support the government of the Hudson's Bay Company as it now exists. All the subordinates in the party say that if you have a commission from Her Majesty to enter here as governor, they will lay down their arms."⁹ A rather novel kind of "rebels," we should say, that profess loyalty to the existing authority (momentarily crippled by unforeseen circumstances), and are even ready to lay down their arms on the production of an authentic commission from the Sovereign, in spite of the grave reasons they have to apprehend that the powers thereby conferred will be abused! Who wrote that the English nation glories in its illogical turn of mind? . . .

Meanwhile, the movement of protestation against Ottawa had the full sympathy of Mr. Ritchot, of St.

⁸As early as 1st Nov., 1869, "the muster-roll was answered by 402 men, all bearing arms; and, while Mr. Provencher was present, about 100 more came to camp and took the oath" (Blue Book, p. 27).

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 22.

Norbert, while Father Lestanc remained neutral, refusing to interfere one way or another,¹⁰ and limiting his action to a plea for unity in any measure that might be taken, as nothing but most regrettable results could be achieved by disunion.¹¹

This was evidently Riel's own opinion, who immediately issued a proclamation inviting the English and French sections of the colony to elect each a deputation of twelve members, who were to meet in a convention and deliberate on what was to be done. Despite the efforts of the Canadian party to have this proclamation ignored by the English-speaking people, all the electoral divisions created for the purpose sent in delegates who met on November 16, 1869.

But, owing to a diversity of interests, but especially to a proclamation against the whole movement which McDougall had importuned the sick Governor of Assiniboia into launching forth that very day, against his own better judgment and the advice of

¹⁰Col. Dennis himself admitted to his chief that in the course of a meeting between insurgent and non-insurgent French halfbreeds (that is, on the occasion *par excellence* when he should have raised his voice on behalf of the former, had he been a partisan), the priest "took little or no part in the proceedings one way or another" (Blue Book, p. 8).

¹¹Messrs. Ritchot, Dugas and Giroux were Canadians and secular priests, while Father Lestanc was an Oblate. Yet, with the lack of accuracy too common among Protestant authors treating of Catholic subjects, Lord Wolseley sees in them all "Jesuit missionaries from France," who, he seriously declares, were in 1870 the *de facto* rulers of the country, though their actual following was smaller than that of the various Protestant sects, a fact entirely disproved by the census that was taken almost immediately after his expedition to Red River ("The Red River Expedition," p. 200).



LOUIS RIEL

After an Authentic Photograph

Judge Black,¹² little more was accomplished by that convention than the drafting of a Bill of Rights to be sent to the Federal authorities.

That the author of, and associates in, the movement were worthy of the public sympathies, is attested by many non-Catholic English writers, whose testimony finds a place among the official records of the time. Thus Governor McTavish admits, under date November 16, 1869, that "the men generally are quiet and orderly, and evidently unwilling to give offence," though he is of opinion that "Riel himself is not inclined to be so civil."¹³ The correspondent of an American paper, who seems careful not to side with any of the contending parties, writes that "they scrupulously respect property, and have forcibly stopped the sale of liquor both in the fort and at the village of Winnipeg."¹⁴ Another has it that "they take an oath to abstain from intoxicating liquors until they have this matter settled, and, so far, have strictly abided by it. They have allowed large quantities of liquors to pass through their camp [at St. Norbert] on their way here [Fort Garry] without touching any of it. In some cases they have opened boxes to search for

¹²The foremost layman in the whole colony. Begg expressly states in his later work, "History of the North-West," vol. I., p. 396, that "had no proclamation been presented to disturb the deliberations of the assembly, there is no saying how much good might have resulted from the convention."

¹³Blue Book, p. 185.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 26.

rifles, but if they were not found, they do not touch the contents."¹⁵

In this temperance pledge, at least, most readers will recognize the much deplored intervention of the clergy. The same correspondent notes the loyal sentiments of the French halfbreeds, saying: "They are anxious that it should be clearly understood that their actions have been solely directed against the Canadian, and not at all the Imperial, Government."

Nor was the abstemiousness of the insurgents confined to Fort Garry or St. Norbert; for a correspondent writing from Pembina expressly states that "no soldier is permitted to take a drop of spirits. The most stringent discipline is observed. If a citizen or outsider is found drunk or disorderly, he is promptly arrested and confined until sober and quiet."¹⁶

Were this necessary, we might further quote another writer who states that "the discipline hitherto maintained has been quite wonderful. There has been no drinking, and the men are civil to all strangers who meet them. The Government, so far, is generally acknowledged to be an improvement upon that of the Company."¹⁷

These quotations we adduce, not as proofs of impeccability on the part of the insurgents, but to show, by the testimony of English-speaking Protes-

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 27.

tants on the spot, whether they were a lawless rabble,¹⁸ as has been contended by would-be historians, and at the same time to illustrate the ideals they had in mind when they first rose.¹⁹ If later on they somewhat relaxed from these exemplary dispositions, and if their chief had at times to show himself autocratic, it came mostly from the opposition and machinations of their enemies and the danger in which many of the English and some of the French occasionally were of becoming their tools. In the case of Riel, the few unnecessary acts of oppression at his hands might furthermore be credited to his youth and a certain excitable disposition which contrasted disagreeably, when opposed, with his usual courtesy and gentlemanly manners.

He constantly endeavoured to bring about the union of the two races in a common protestation and secure the unanimous adoption of a Bill of Rights to be submitted to the Ottawa Government as a condition for their entering Confederation. But, faithful to the old motto: divide that thou mayest rule, Me-

¹⁸Lord Wolseley publicly called them *banditti*.

¹⁹To give an example of the *despotic* (?) ways of "the wretched man, Louis Riel" (Worseley, "The Red River Expedition," p. 219), we herewith reproduce a note he sent, 27th Dec., 1869, to the saloon keepers in and around Winnipeg, at a time when disorders due to drink are but too common and when an invasion of the Sioux was feared:

"Sir:

"I do hereby respectfully pray you to let nobody have any liquor at your place from this date up to the tenth of January next. In so doing you will grant the country a great favour, and very likely preserve it from great misfortune.

"Yours very respectfully,

"LOUIS RIEL."

Dougall, who was but imperfectly informed as to the real state of affairs, as unceasingly strove to excite one section of the population against the other. Canada refused to accept the country as long as it remained disaffected.²⁰ Hence the transfer of the same to the Dominion was postponed until some sort of arrangement could be concluded with the Assiniboians.²¹

This did not prevent McDougall from publishing, as much as he could under the circumstances (December 1st), a proclamation whereby the Queen was supposed to appoint him Lieutenant-Governor of the Northwest Territories. On the following day, he introduced himself as such in a second document of identical nature to all of Her Majesty's officials in said territories.

He did more. On the sixth of the same month, he issued still another proclamation, this time to Col. John Stoughton Dennis, whom he appointed his

²⁰Lord Wolseley is misleading when he asserts that "the Governor appointed by the Hudson's Bay Company was to exercise authority until Mr. McDougall reached Fort Garry" (*op. cit.*, p. 217), thereby implying that McDougall was to have been vested with authority immediately after his arrival, whether the country had been transferred or not to Canada.

²¹In consequence, McDougall was duly notified (19th Nov., 1869) that he could "claim or assert no authority in the Hudson's Bay Territory until the Queen's Proclamation, annexing the country to Canada," reached him. Apart from this, McDougall knew so well that he needed official notification before he could act as governor that, on the 7th of November, he had written to McTavish: "I shall remain here [Pembina] until I hear officially of the transfer of authority," and on the 14th of the same month he had thus addressed the Secretary of State, at Ottawa: "Until the transfer of the Territory has taken place, and I am notified of the fact, I shall not assume any of the responsibilities of government" (Blue Book, p. 83).

"Lieutenant and Conservator of the peace," with power to "raise, organize, arm, equip and provision a sufficient force . . . to assault, fire upon, pull down, or break into any fort, house, stronghold or other place" in which those who refused to be delivered up unconditionally to the tender mercies of Ottawa's minions might be found. A rather novel sort of conservator of the peace, indeed, whose very first duty is to bring civil war on a country to which he has not the shadow of a right!

So far, as we have seen from Protestant testimony, the halfbreeds had recognized the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company, while judging that, in the course of the exceptional circumstances their country was traversing, the moribund state of its rule demanded a special intervention on their part. When shown a copy of McDougall's proclamation, the Governor of Assiniboia declared his own authority at an end. But Riel and his friends had their doubts concerning the genuineness of that document. They waited a little, and, when satisfied of its worthlessness, they published themselves a proclamation wherein, "after having invoked the God of nations," they declared themselves exempt from all allegiance "to the government of the Hudson's Bay Company, which had betrayed their interests" and but lately abdicated its powers through the declaration of its head (December 8, 1869). At the same time, they added that they held themselves "in readiness to enter into such negotiations with the Canadian Gov-

ernment as may be favourable for the good government and prosperity of this people.'"²²

Thenceforth they acted on the principles of their declaration, believing that all lawful authority but their own had momentarily disappeared from Red River: that assumed by McDougall was premature and void, and that of the old Government of Assiniboia had just been given up by Mr. McTavish.

Two days later they solemnly hoisted a flag bearing the French fleur-de-lis with the Irish shamrock, a step which was to become the occasion of much obloquy and which they might have omitted with advantage to their cause, since, with one single exception, their devotion to British interests was well known. Yet, even on this occasion, they were but following the example of those who afterwards raised such an outcry against that incident. The British flag was not known in Red River; the flag of the Hudson's Bay Company had, to a late date, been that of the country, and the Canadian party had for several years, hoisted in opposition thereto a flag of their own make, that is, the Union Jack, with the partizan word "CANADA" in large letters.

As already hinted, most of Riel's apparently aggressive measures were really but acts of self-defence. For instance, his definitive assertion of power had been hastened by the stand the Canadian party had recently taken at his very door. Under date November 29th, McDougall had written that

²²Blue Book, p. 75.

he had taken measures to "organize an armed force to seize Riel and his colleagues, and disperse the rank and file of his followers."²⁸ His astounding provocation to civil war of December 6th, was but another step in the same programme. While Dennis was busy agitating among the English, a number of Canadians and sympathizers had gathered in Dr. Schultz's house, where barrels of flour and pork sent from Ottawa for the labourers on the Dawson road were stored. As these provisions were being gradually removed, apparently with a view to their being used by McDougall's possible recruits and thus contributing towards civil war, Riel demanded their surrender. This was refused, and the Canadians openly defied him. Therefore, on December 7th, he forcibly took them and made prisoners the leaders of the malcontents to the number of forty-five.

Riel had so far kept himself in the background. On Christmas Day, 1869, he ostensibly assumed the title of President of the Provisional Government, with Louis Schmidt (a halfbreed who enjoyed a college education) as secretary.

That same day intelligence was received that two gentlemen sent by Ottawa had arrived at Pembina. They were Vicar-General Thibault, who had now passed eighteen months in the east, and Col. Charles de Salaberry, son of the hero of Châteauguay. Neither had any power to treat officially with the Provisional Government; they had simply been

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 55.

deputed to use their influence to persuade the Métis to disarm. Their mission was therefore doomed to failure.

Two days later, another commissioner, Mr. Donald A. Smith (to-day Lord Strathcona), came from the same quarters with an identical mission, but armed with papers whose production occasioned a mass meeting of the people, January 19 and 20, 1870. This was at best a most dangerous venture, on which Mr. Smith insisted. The convening of so conflicting elements in the presence of a party who, however honourable he might be, was none the less hostile to the movement of protestation, was tantamount to bringing fire and powder together. Hence the noisiness of the proceedings that ensued when, in spite of a temperature 20° below zero, fully a thousand attended the meeting, among whom were all the notabilities of the country, lay and clerical, of both Catholic and Protestant persuasions.

The Blue Book again testifies to the fact that Father Lestanc used his influence merely in the interests of peace and mutual amity between the two sections of the people, which some motions had had for object to estrange. At the conclusion "cheers were given for Father Lestanc, Bishop Machray,²⁴ Father Ritchot, Mr. Riel, Mr. O'Donoghue and the commissioners. . . . Father Ritchot said that he was glad to be present with the Bishop of Rupert's Land and the clergy of various denominations. All, he

²⁴The Anglican Bishop of Rupert's Land.

believed, came there with the best interests of the people at heart. They came there to see that order and good feeling prevailed, and to influence the people as far as they could in the direction of what was right and just. The clergy were also citizens, and as such they were glad to be present and promote those objects.²⁵



REV. MR. RITCHOT'S SIGNATURE.

We purposely quote this reference to Mr. Ritchot's speech from the official Blue Book,²⁶ because his words, such as recalled, give perfectly the scope and extent of his intervention throughout the whole troubles.

²⁵Blue Book, p. 103.

²⁶Which was published at London, England, in the course of 1870.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.

1870.

The practical outcome of the meeting held at the instance of Commissioner Smith was the decision to have a new convention, at which twenty delegates of the English part of the colony should meet an equal number of French representatives to consider his commission and "decide what would be best for the welfare of the country."¹ This assembly was convoked with the approval of Ottawa's accredited agent, who "went around to induce the people to elect representatives to the Council of February."² This first met on January 25, 1870, and, as it "was composed of men of good standing in the community, especially the English members,"³ it resulted in real advantage to the cause of peace and harmony.

For the first time, the English population concurred in the formation of a Provisional Government, after their delegates had satisfied themselves of Governor McTavish's abdication. To this effect, Mr. (afterwards Senator) John Sutherland, went to interview him on his sick bed with Messrs. John

¹Blue Book, p. 104.

²Thos. Bunn's sworn testimony, "Report of Select Committee," p. 118.

³*Ibid.*, p. 121.

Fraser, Xavier Pagé and Ambrose D. Lépine. The first named thus relates the incident in a deposition under oath: "Our question was in this sense: Was Governor McTavish still governor of this country, and would he continue it? The answer was: 'Form some government for God's sake; I have no power or authority.'"¹⁶ These words being reported to the convention, did away with any scruples the English members might still have entertained.

As a consequence, the convention elected, with only one dissentient voice, Louis Riel, "President of the Provisional Government of Rupert's Land"; while Thomas Bunn was named Secretary; O'Donoghue, Treasurer; James Ross, Chief Justice; A. G. B. Bannatyne, Postmaster-General, and Ambrose D. Lépine, Adjutant-General, or Chief of the Militia.

Any impartial reader will now realize that, by the end of February, 1870, first, there was at Red River no other government, lawful or unlawful, than that presided over by Louis Riel; second, this had been formed by the free representatives of all classes of the people, with the approval of Ottawa's Special Commissioner Smith, and at the bidding of the ex-Governor of Assiniboia; third, this government was the only one possible under the circumstances, since even Wm. McDougall afterwards admitted in the Canadian Parliament that "it was absurd to say that

¹⁶He remained, of course, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company in America.

"Preliminary Investigation and Trial of A. D. Lépine," p. 80.

the Hudson's Bay Company should have maintained order, as they were in a moribund state of existence."⁶

We might add that its delegates or special envoys were afterwards officially recognized by the Federal authorities, and that Riel was himself directed by Sir George Cartier to continue in the exercise of his presidential functions until the arrival of the new governor to be named by Ottawa.⁷

That government, therefore, enjoyed all the necessary guarantees of legitimacy possible under the circumstances, and must have been vested with sufficient authority to provide effectively for its own preservation, and make itself respected by the few malcontents who should attempt to overthrow it. Hence, all such as affect to call it the "so-called Provisional Government," and term its head the "would-be President," thereby simply betray their own ignorance or bad faith. In view of what was to happen, these are facts that should not be lost sight of.

The same convention, in union with the new gov-

⁶Blue Book, p. 146. We might add, as a fourth conclusion, that, since Riel's government was composed of four English, as against two French, members, it is sovereignly unjust to represent the movement as a purely French one.

⁷"I then asked Sir George who was to govern the country pending the arrival of the Lieutenant-Governor, and if he was to name somebody to do so. He answered, 'No, let Mr. Riel continue to maintain order and govern the country as he has done up to the present moment.' He asked me if I thought that Riel was sufficiently powerful to maintain order. I said I thought he was. Then he answered, 'Let him continue till the Governor comes,' " (Ritchot's testimony in "Report of the Select Committee," p. 77).

ernment now recognized by all the Assiniboians, prepared a more explicit Bill of Rights to be submitted to Ottawa, and appointed three delegates to proceed thither and negotiate its acceptance by the Federal authorities. These were Rev. Mr. Ritchot, Judge Black and Mr. Alfred Scott.

Highly gratified at the union of the races and interests for which he had persistently laboured, and no less pleased at his own confirmation in the presidency, Riel now liberated sixteen of his prisoners and promised to set the others free in the near future. Just then, however, intelligence was received that a band of Canadian malcontents, led by Major C. W. Boulton, had reached Headingly in their march from Portage la Prairie to the English part of the Settlement, where they expected to be joined by great numbers, whom they intended to incite against the very government they had just formed through their representatives. Their plan was then to attack Fort Garry, and overthrow Riel. Schultz, who had previously escaped with Thomas Scott, a bad character, William Gaddee, a spy, and two others, had taken possession of the Stone Fort, on the lower Red River, and, by dint of misrepresentations and coaxing, had succeeded in raising a large force with the same object in view.

All the good achieved by the convention was thereby reduced to naught.

Early in the morning of February 15th, the Portage party, equipped with ladders to scale the walls

of Fort Garry, passed in sight of Riel, who with difficulty kept his men from breaking out and attacking them. Father Lestanc had repeatedly added to his exhortations to union a strong plea against the shedding of blood, and though no friend of Riel's, his words had nevertheless made an impression on the president.

The Canadian rebels against the sole authority of the land repaired to a house which Riel was known to frequent, and Thomas Scott made himself conspicuous by his eagerness in searching for him at the very time when the president was "urging his influence to restrain the French from attacking their party."⁸

After their junction with Schultz's recruits in the lower settlement, the rebels numbered between six and seven hundred, among whom we regret to have to count a number of Indians.⁹ About five hundred French were stationed within Fort Garry. Fearing lest the Catholic establishments at St. Boniface should be made to serve as a base of operation against the fort, Riel had the Bishop's Palace occupied by some of his own soldiers.

As Begg remarks, this "movement did not originate with the settlers themselves; but, being urged by a few firebrands to rush without forethought into an undertaking which was likely to destroy at one sweep their labours of years in the Settlement, they

⁸Begg, "The Creation of Manitoba," p. 279.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 287.

forgot their homes, their families and their better judgment to plunge prematurely into a civil war."¹⁰

Things were now reaching a climax. But a Miss McVicar boldly interposed herself, and impressed upon Riel the necessity of releasing the twenty-four remaining prisoners, since the English insurgents had made their liberation a pretext for their rising. Riel remarked that he had long wanted to give them their liberty, but they had refused to sign an agreement not to rise any longer against the Provisional Government. Being at length persuaded to subscribe to that document, they were set free and the English insurgents notified of the fact. In answer to that conciliatory measure, the latter wrote the president that they would not recognize his government, but attempt to overthrow it. Whereupon Riel took every means of strengthening his position and weakening that of his adversaries, writing them at the same time a characteristic letter wherein he said:

"We are ready to meet any party; but peace, our British rights, we want before all. Gentlemen; the prisoners are out—they have sworn to keep the peace. We have taken the responsibility of our past acts. Mr. William McTavish has asked you, for the sake of God, to form and complete the Provisional Government. Your representatives have joined us on that ground. Who will now come and destroy the Red River Settlement?"¹¹

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 280, 281.

¹¹Begg, "The Creation of Manitoba," p. 287.

This did not prevent the English from going on with their bellicose preparations.¹² But, being without organization or commissariat and the news of Riel's determined stand leaking out among them, they soon after returned to their homes. In the morning of the 17th a party of Portagers passed in sight of Fort Garry. After the terrible anxieties and the sleepless watches of the last two days and nights, Riel could no longer restrain his men. They sallied out after those whom they knew to be the cause of the whole trouble, and captured them all, to the number of forty-eight, among whom were Major Boulton and Thomas Scott. In the words of Alex. Begg, "this ended this mad-like expedition from Portage."¹³

¹²"It were perfectly impracticable to attempt a refutation of all the misstatements published on that troubled period. But since we have admitted that Dr. Bryce was more truthful in his last book than in his previous productions, we may as well single out this particular for a demonstration of the way facts may be given a complexion which renders them unrecognizable. Dr. Bryce would have us believe that, "alarmed at the movement [of the Portage men], Riel released all the prisoners in the fort. Their object being gained, the men of the Kildonan Church camp, who had grown to be six hundred strong, dissolved" ("The Romantic Settlement of Lord Selkirk's Colonists," p. 297). The truth is, according to Begg, who was on the spot, that even after Riel's manly letter, "the English party continued to go on with their preparations to attack Fort Garry. They levied provisions from the neighboring houses, and endeavored to form some sort of order amongst the people collected around the church" ("The Creation of Manitoba," p. 289).

We might also add that, despite Bryce's assertion that Riel then arrested "by an unheard of act of treachery" such of those misguided men as were seen passing by Fort Garry, on their way home, the President of the Provisional Government had nothing to do with the affair. It was O'Donoghue who lead the party which intercepted them, and they were clearly given to understand that they were made prisoners.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 290.

Exasperated by this ever-recurring hostility and lack of good faith after the recognition of his government, Riel thought no peace could be secured until the ringleaders of the chronic risings were convinced of the authorities' determination to defend themselves at all costs against their perennial intrigues. Boulton was therefore condemned to death on the charge of treason.¹⁴ Yet, owing to the intercession of influential parties, among whom was Father Lestanc, his life was spared,¹⁵ and Donald A. Smith undertook to pacify the malcontents, so that he might, by effecting their return to union, obtain the release of all the prisoners.

But among the latter there was one who, by his abusive language and violent actions, proved to be

¹⁴William Gaddee had already met with a similar fate, which was intended to awe the malcontents into submission rather than punish a rebel, as was proved by the way in which the sentence was executed. Riel went to Gaddee with a guard of six men, and made the condemned man kneel before his executioners, who had already cocked their guns. Then the President went out to him, and, touching him on the shoulder, addressed him thus: "Get up, Gaddee; we don't mean to harm you. But remember that you must consider yourself as dead. You will stay here a few days more, and then we will secretly make you pass into the United States." Instead of following these directions, the foolish man escaped under circumstances of particular discomfort, and showed his gratitude by starting ridiculously false stories about a priest administering holy communion (!) on the spot of his would-be execution to make men shoot him who shrank from the task. Such is the gullibility of some non-Catholics that they cannot see the unparalleled absurdity of such a statement, but publish it as undoubted truth. (See Hill's "History of Manitoba," p. 299).

¹⁵"Mr. Boulton came to the bishop's house to thank me for the favour I had obtained. He said: 'I owe you my life; how can I thank you?' He was so grateful that he touched my heart, and he promised never to forget the favour obtained at our hands." (From a lecture delivered by Father Lestanc at Calgary, 4th March, 1909, and reproduced by the press of the West).

a thorn in the side of the president. This was Thomas Scott, who had inaugurated his career in the Middle West by attempting to drown the superintendent of the Dawson road, because that gentleman refused to pay him for the three days during which he had remained idle as a protest against the food given him.¹⁰ Arrested several times for inciting to rebellion against the Provisional Government, he had either been released on parole or escaped from his place of confinement. Latterly, he had become unmanageable, striking his guards with his chains, breaking open the doors of his prison and assaulting the president himself.

Out of patience at his insolence and aggressiveness, his guards had one day retaliated by dragging him out, and were about to sacrifice him when one of the French councillors rescued him from their hands. On March 1st Riel was told of the prisoner's conduct, and warned that several of his fellows, encouraged by the impunity with which his antics were treated, now shared his insubordination. The guards assured him that, unless an example was made, it would soon be impossible to keep any prisoner.

The president endeavoured to calm them. Then he entreated Scott to be peaceful and act as a reasonable man, under pain of having soon to face a terrible fate, as plain hints were beginning to be made that, if his outrages remained unpunished, Riel

¹⁰He would probably have succeeded in his evil designs but for the intervention of a French-Canadian named Olivier Ducharme.

himself would have to answer for them. Whereupon Scott only sneered at his interlocutor and insulted him. Having that very day renewed his acts of violence, the guards, now thoroughly incensed, clamoured for a court-martial, and broke out into unveiled threats at Riel if this was not granted.

Two days more did the latter manage to temporize. Then he thought that the interests of peace among the malcontents, if not his own personal safety, demanded that Scott be made an example of. He was therefore summoned before the council of war, composed of seven,¹⁷ and almost unanimously condemned to death.

When it became known that this time there was surely to be an execution, several persons, among whom were Donald A. Smith and Father Lestanc, begged Riel to pardon the doomed man. But Riel had been too often trifled with: the ruthless spirits in the colony, who smarted under their recent discomfiture and probably meditated new risings, would not take his government seriously unless they were shown that it could defend itself by exercising the powers of life and death inherent to all governments, especially in times such as the Red River Settlement was then traversing. Moreover, the example of the unruly prisoner "had been productive of the very worst effects on the other prisoners, who had become insubordinate to such an extent that it was difficult

¹⁷In which Riel took no part.

to withhold the guards from retaliating."¹⁸ As to Father Festanc's intervention, the halfbreed leader who, according to Major Boulton, had risen to power by using the priests to further his designs, "would brook little interference on their part," especially when this came from one with whom he had never been on friendly terms.¹⁹

Accordingly, Scott was shot outside of the fort walls at noon of the 4th of March.²⁰ Hearing of this the ringleaders of the periodical risings decamped of themselves, and "after this the Provisional Government went on peacefully until the arrival of Colonel Wolseley." This remark is by Mr. Bannatyne, of whom even Robert Hill writes that "there is no name received with more respect throughout the great Northwest than that of Hon. A. G. B. Bannatyne."²¹

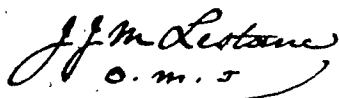
¹⁸"Smith's Report," in Begg's "History of the North-West," vol. I., pp. 507, 508.

¹⁹Boulton, "Reminiscences of the North-West Rebellions," pp. 136, 137. Toronto, 1886.

²⁰Will any one learn why, in the opinion of Lord Wolseley, Thomas Scott, the whilom would-be murderer of his own employer, was singled out for execution? "Because he had been most loud-spoken in his expressions of loyalty to the Queen" ("The Red River Expedition," p. 219)! A companion in arms, Capt. G. L. Huyshe, is no less positive. Scott's *only crime*, he declares, "had been loyalty to his Queen and devotion to his country" ("The Red River Expedition," p. 20. London, 1871)!! Nor is this all. Every student of Manitoban history knows that the poor man was court-martialled on the 3rd of March, and executed on the morrow, attended by his chaplain. But Capt. Huyshe is positive that "with inhuman cruelty his execution was ordered to take place at noon the *same day* (*op. cit.*). Yet even this pales before Wolseley's assertion that Scott's executioners "were at the same time addressed by a French priest on the ground where it (the murder) was committed, and told they were about to perform a righteous act" (*op. cit.*, p. 220). Such is the way history is written when entrusted to soldiers!

²¹Hill, "History of Manitoba," pp. 755, 756.

We might pass without comment on an event which, according to a Protestant correspondent of the oldest paper in Winnipeg, "has received attention altogether out of proportion to its importance";²² but prejudiced writers and press hirelings have made it a text for too many calumnies against the Catholic Church to leave us free to pursue such a course. We are all the more able to remark dispassionately on the same as, in our opinion, the regularity of Scott's execution, regrettable as it may be, plainly flows from the legitimacy of the authority under which it was consummated. So that, had it taken place with the approval of the Church, as has been claimed, or even at her bidding, as a few have not been ashamed to write, we do not think that such an action would call for any attempt at palliation on our part. For all impartial and unprejudiced minds, the question must be, not one of lawfulness, but of opportuneness.



J. J. M. Lestanc
O. M. S.

FATHER LESTANC'S SIGNATURE.

Father Lestanc has been blamed for abetting that execution by people who base their surmises on the able, and apparently impartial, report of Special Commissioner Smith. But if any fair-minded lover

²² "The Free Press," 10th April, 1909.

of history will closely study that document, he will not be long in discovering under its polished sentences unmistakable signs of two uncontrollable aversions, probably not realized by the writer who framed it, but none the less potent factors in his appreciation of persons and facts. The object of the first was Riel himself, and Smith would not have been human had it been otherwise. An honoured representative of the Hudson's Bay Company in Montreal, he was confronted at Red River by an immense establishment belonging to that body, but now in the hands of people among whom he had not been when they were provoked into taking possession of it. He saw there a young, dashing and somewhat autocratic halfbreed controlling men and things that were not his: evidently no good Company man could be a witness to such a reversal of the normal rôles without harbouring for the author of the anomaly sentiments not the most friendly.

In this nobody can blame Mr. Smith. But it was precisely on account of that gentleman's connection with the great Company that, with his undiplomatic brusqueness, Father Lestanc deemed it his duty to tell him point blank: "I am sorry that you have been sent to advise the halfbreeds here. You are not the man for it; you are a Company man, and you are not welcome."²³ How could a stranger thus greeted speak or write without prejudice of the one who received him?

²³From Fr. Lestanc's lecture, as above.

Moreover, there was the question of language. Commissioner Smith's knowledge of French was then very imperfect. If the priest happened to address a halfbreed in that language, his words were quite liable to be misconstrued by the mind of a stranger already biassed against him. It is thus that, according to the commissioner, when the fate of Scott was mentioned to Riel, "Père Lestanc interposed in French words meaning: 'Is there no way of escape?' "²⁴ a sentence which, as translated by Smith, is open to a damaging interpretation, while, as a matter of fact, Lestanc meant: "Could you not find means of avoiding that execution?" "²⁵

Another instance of misapprehension due to a similar cause is Donald Smith's charge,²⁶ that he was threatened by Riel and Father Lestanc. Both men simply warned him of the danger in which he was putting himself and the country by trying, as they believed, to disunite the people and thereby provoke a civil war, out of spite for Riel, a circumstance to which Smith alludes himself in his report.²⁷ Of his

²⁴In Begg's "History of the North-West," vol. I., p. 507.

²⁵Lestanc's lecture.

²⁶Begg, *ubi supra*, vol. I., p. 496.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 494. An instance of the wrong conclusions which biassed minds may reach out of premises that are in reality far from warranting them, is found in the following from Boulton's "Reminiscences of the North-West Rebellions" (p. 61): "The attitude of the Church seemed more clear when O'Donohue, who at that time was being educated for the priesthood at St. Boniface, and was a teacher there, saw fit to leave those duties to join Riel." From the context it is plain that the author of that work sees in that step evident connivance of the Church with the insurgents. Now here is what we read in the MSS. Memoir of Rev. Mr. Giroux, who never

animosity against the president we have unequivocal tokens in his own document, and, unknown to himself, that animosity betrays him into making unwarranted assertions and even self-contradictory statements.²⁸

One more remark on that unfortunate execution. As an outcome of the outbreak of 1869, we have to

saw Maj. Boulton's book: "The Administrator [Fr. Lestane] having learned that Mr. O'Donoghue was paying pretty frequent visits to Riel, and was wont to meet Mr. Kennedy at Fort Garry, he called to himself the young ecclesiastic and expressly forbade him to go to the fort." Giroux's Memoir then goes on to relate how O'Donoghue preferred to forsake all his prospects of advancement in the Church to severing his connection with his new friends and their plans.

*For instance, p. 492 of his Report, as given by Begg (*op. cit.*), he refers to the lamentable spectacle offered by "the fort with its large supply of ammunition, provisions and stores of all kinds [which] was in the possession of the French halfbreeds, whose leaders had declared their determination to use every effort for the purpose of annexing the Territory to the United States!" while, p. 509, he relates how, in the course of a conversation, Riel told him: "Do not attempt to prejudice us against the Americans, for although we have not been with them, they are with us, and have been better friends to us than the Canadians."

Near the end of his Report he implies that *many* of the Catholic priests then in Red River, being Frenchmen, did not care for the British connection, because of their little familiarity with British laws and institutions. We have already seen that Father Lestane was the only native of France then in contact with the people; but it would be impossible to doubt for a moment the loyalty of so sternly scrupulous a man, especially at a time when he was filling the place of a Canadian bishop who was so well known for his patriotism. The same remark applies to his two French companions, who would never have dared to act against their bishop's sentiments. Were any one disposed to question the appositeness of this observation, we would only have to refer him to an account of the Red River troubles written from an American point of view, wherein a certain party is represented as desirous of bringing about the annexation of the country to the United States. That account takes for granted what its author so heartily wished; then it goes on to remark that the party referred to "thought General Riel was similarly inclined," an assertion which we know to be absolutely without foundation; "but," continues the correspondent, "the priests, who really have more power than either, were opposed to it," that is, to annexation (Blue Book, p. 81).

reckon the death of Hon. J. Sutherland's son, who was shot by Parisien as the latter was escaping from his captors; of the same Parisien, who died of the ill-treatment he then received, and of Elzéar Goulet, who was stoned to death as he swam across the Red River pursued by a mob of volunteers from Ontario. Yet the English-Canadian press scarcely mentioned those most regrettable events, which are now practically forgotten by the majority of English readers, though the victim of the first, at least, was an in-offensive young man, the son of a respectable family, against the memory of whom nothing can be said.

But when a man who was known as an inveterate perturber of the peace, a most violent character who had all but taken the life of his employer, an agitator who gloried in his determination to leave no effort untried to overthrow the Government which the country had deliberately given itself, when that man had been executed after a regular trial because the effects of his violence (from which he would not desist) were becoming disastrous, a perfect hue and cry was raised against the French from one end of Ontario to the other. A wind of dementia seemed to agitate the most solid heads; the most absurd stories and palpable inventions²⁹ were swallowed as Gospel

²⁹It is related that some genius, having got hold of a phial, filled it with the blood of some animal, and, finding a stray bit of rope, perambulated the towns of Ontario with these treasures, which he exhibited as the blood of Scott, and the rope with which he had been bound; whereupon the guileless shouted and screamed and howled, vowing vengeance on the halfbreeds and hysterically calling for the head of Riel. Fanaticism was so rampant that apparently

truths; the death of Riel and his lieutenants was resolved upon; a prize was put on the halfbreed leader's head, and even grave Judge E. B. Wood, in his address to the jury before whom one of those lieutenants was tried, did not scruple to compare uncontrollable Scott, executed for his faults, to the spotless Lamb sacrificed by the Jews!

Why, we may ask, why this unwarranted tempest and those incredible excesses? Two words will suffice for an answer: Thomas Scott was an Orangeman. Hence, as long as bigotry and fanaticism hold sway over a certain class of men, some are bound to speak of his execution as of a murder, and will continue to call him a martyr. With such men the claims of impartial history count for very little: passions alone rule, and passions are blind.

no one marvelled at the kindness of the monster in allowing the sympathizers of Scott to gather up his blood in presence of his executioners, that it might be exhibited to stir up the passions of thoughtless mobs! Had any one then cared for truth, he would have soon found out that, immediately on the shooting of the poor man, Riel had ordered the evacuation of the spot, threatening with confinement any one who would be found there five minutes afterwards.

⁸⁰ "Preliminary Investigation and Trial of Ambrose D. Lépine," p. 120.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE END OF THE INSURRECTION, AND THE FENIAN RAID. 1870-1871.

The trend of the momentous events of those years, 1869-70, has diverted our attention from the head of the diocese so violently agitated. But the very course of the same now takes us back to him. He was attending the great Council of the Vatican, when the Canadian Government, now thoroughly awakened to the seriousness of the situation in the Middle West, begged him to return to Red River, and use his influence to pacify, as they said, the country of his adoption. Though his representations had previously met with so scant consideration, he patriotically put aside all personal feelings and, on February 9, 1870, arrived at Ottawa, where he had several interviews with the Governor-General and some of his ministers. Armed with letters from them and carrying to his distracted people a formal promise of amnesty for all that had been done, the bishop set out for the west. One of the documents to be communicated to them emanated from the Secretary of State for the Provinces, Honourable Joseph Howe, and contained the following: "It is important that you should know that the proceedings by which the

lives and properties of the people of Rupert's Land were jeopardized¹ for a time were at once disavowed and condemned by the Government of the Dominion, as you will readily discover in the dispatch addressed by me to Mr. McDougall on the 24th of December."²

The bishop's early return was learned the very day of Scott's execution, and on March 9th he was again at St. Boniface. There he was grieved not to receive from Riel the welcome to which his children had accustomed him. The very name of Ottawa then jarred on the nerves of the halfbreed leader, who could not be persuaded of the sincerity of its professions of friendliness, and Mgr. Taché was known to be the bearer of messages from the Federal authorities. Hence when the garrison of Fort Garry asked permission to go and receive his blessing, he allowed them to do so, but did not budge himself, remarking: "It is not the Bishop of St. Boniface, it is Canada, who passes." Moreover, he put guards at the doors of the palace, a mark of unfounded suspicion which deeply wounded the prelate.

¹This official admission disposes of Dr. Bryce's implicit contention that the greed of the Ontarians had only "unoccupied lands" for object.

²Begg, "The Creation of Manitoba," p. 313. Here are some of the incriminating remarks addressed to Mr. McDougall by the Secretary of State: "You have used the Queen's name without her authority, and organized an armed force within the Territory of the Hudson Bay Company, without warrant or instructions. . . . As the organization and use of such a force by you was, under the circumstances, entirely illegal, the Governor-General and Council cannot disguise from you the weight of responsibility you have incurred." (Blue Book, p. 83).

Yet bearing in mind only the interests of peace, the latter went himself two days later to visit the president and other members of the Provisional Government, when, returning to more generous sentiments, Riel granted him a right royal reception.

On the following Sunday (March 13th), the bishop preached "an eloquent sermon" on the situation, when "the church was crowded to excess." This, according to Alex. Begg, had a most beneficial influence on subsequent events. Two days later a special session of the convention was held to hear what he had to say, which was productive of great good. At his request Riel released over fifteen of his prisoners, among whom was Major Boulton, and the three delegates who, owing to the prevailing distrust of Ottawa, had not yet started on their mission, were ordered thither. They took with them the latest copy of the Bill of Rights, together with credentials from the Provisional Government. The former contained twenty clauses, one of which asked that both "English and French languages be common in the Legislature and the Courts"; another, that "the Lieutenant-Governor (a third added the Judges of the Superior Court) be familiar with both languages." Clause VII. stipulated that the schools must be separate, and that the monies therefor should be divided among the various religious denominations in proportion to their respective population.

The delegates reached Ottawa on April 11th; but

so high ran the excitement caused by the execution of Scott that two of them, Messrs. Ritchot and Alfred Scott, were immediately arrested for participation in the "crime." However, they were soon after released, while the fanatics of Ontario were holding indignation meetings which usually terminated in a resolution to lynch the two delegates should they ever come their way.

This incident, whereby common law was set at defiance, was deemed so grave that it occasioned telegraphic correspondence between the London and the Ottawa Governments.⁸ On the banks of the Red it led to a further demonstration of Riel's loyalty to Great Britain. For some time, at the instance of Bishop Taché, the Union Jack had replaced the fleur-de-lys and shamrock of the Provisional Government, which the prelate thought of a nature to mislead such of the English-speaking as did not know its real significance. On hearing of the outrage on the delegates, O'Donoghue, who bore no love to the British, took down their flag and hoisted in its stead his beloved shamrock standard. At the same time, he did not scruple to trample the former under foot. This having been reported to Riel, he immediately ordered the Union Jack to be raised again, and sta-

⁸On the 18th of April Earl Granville cabled: "Was arrest of delegates authorized by Canadian Government? Send full information by telegraph." To which the Governor-General replied (25th April): "Delegates discharged by order of magistrates. Proceedings against them at an end," and later on a long cablegram of explanations followed. In another cable (18th May) Lord Granville manifested his pleasure at learning of their release.

tioned at the foot of the pole one of his most trusted captains, André Nault, with explicit orders to *shoot* anyone who should again tamper with it.*

The result of the negotiations between the delegates and the Canadian Government, represented by John A. Macdonald and Sir George Etienne Cartier, was quite satisfactory. It has become known as the Manitoba Act, which, adopted May 3rd, was signed in the name of the Queen on the following 12th. It embodied practically all the demands contained in the Bill of Rights, and is to this day the greatest monument to the wisdom which prompted the resistance of 1869.

The mission of the Provisional Government was thereby at an end. Yet, owing to local and other circumstances, disarming would have been equivalent to calling on civil war. Therefore, following Sir George's advice, Riel continued at his post, with the intention of yielding the direction of affairs to Mr. Adam G. Archibald, who had been named Lieutenant-Governor. At the same time, it was known that troops, English and Canadian, were coming on a mission of peace, as their commander publicly declared in a proclamation which Riel himself caused to be printed, in order to facilitate the trans-

*This is probably the incident referred to by Alex. Begg in his first volume of the "History of the North-West," p. 485, and said to have happened on the 20th of April.

*Col. G. I. Wolseley; see Begg's "The Creation of Manitoba," p. 383.

fer of the country to Canada, should objection thereto be raised.^o

It never entered into Riel's head to oppose this force, though, with the intimate knowledge of the country possessed by his own men and the military stores at their disposal, this could most certainly have been done with success. Yet the question of resistance was one that long disturbed his peace of mind and occasioned almost daily wranglings with his treasurer, O'Donoghue, who was insistent on the advisability of making a stand against Wolseley. The scenes this difference of opinions occasioned between leader and lieutenant are to this day well remembered by many eye-witnesses. Hence the supreme injustice of accusing Riel of cowardly sneaking away at the approach of the red-coats after he had used such loud talk before they came.

Strong in his sense of the legality of his position, he expected to have the privilege of welcoming the new governor when, on the arrival of Wolseley's force, he was assured that his life was in danger if he stayed one minute longer, and had to leave for the south. Even one of his worst enemies, General Butler, is a witness to the truth of this assertion. As

Lord Wolseley and others seek to make it appear that the expedition he led was destined to put down the "rebellion;" and yet he admits (p. 224) that so favourable were the terms granted to the halfbreeds, after the negotiations with the delegates "Mr. Riel had been invited to send to Ottawa" (p. 222), that all opposition [was thus] removed in the eyes of the French, which is tantamount to saying: whereas the halfbreeds had been granted what they had risen for, an expedition was then dispatched to put down their opposition to the realization of their own wishes! We wonder if this is a sample of English logic. See Appendix D.

the soldier mentioned the rumours which represented him as making active preparations to resist the approaching expedition:

"Nothing is more false than these statements," exclaimed Riel. "I only wish to retain power until I can resign it to a proper government. I have done everything for the sake of peace and to prevent bloodshed among the people of the land."

Were any confirmation of this needed, we would only have to adduce the letter he wrote (July 24, 1870), to Bishop Taché, who had returned to Ottawa to promote more efficaciously by verbal explanations the cause of peace and of the promised amnesty. "We are preparing ourselves," wrote the president, "for the arrival of the governor. We shall try to show him as many horsemen⁸ as possible. What a task you have assumed, my Lord, in repairing to that so wicked Ottawa! We have friends there, but who could count our enemies? What is consoling is to be a Christian, and to think that no real harm can happen to us as long as God is with us. Be that as it may, the troops and the governor will be received with enthusiasm."⁹ And in a postscript: "My most profound respects to Mr. Archibald; we earnestly desire his coming."¹⁰

⁸"The Great Lone Land," p. 134.

⁹To accompany him as an escort.

¹⁰Translated from the original French.

¹¹Yet, in spite of these eminently peaceful designs, Capt. Huyshe writes that "it is evident that Riel would have fought it out, had his men stuck to him." And why is the soldier so sure of this?

A few days later, one who had been living by the side of Riel ever since the capture of Fort Garry, though he had to suffer thereby, J. H. McTavish, wrote to the same prelate: "I feel confident that the Provisional Government are determined *coûte que coûte* to hand everything over quietly to the proper authorities."¹¹ The French locution *coûte que coûte* ("come what may") was rendered necessary by the intelligence the same party had to communicate to the bishop relative to the Canadian sympathizers remaining in the country. "They entertain the hope that, as soon as the troops arrive, martial law will be proclaimed, to be followed by the hanging of a few of the French party; such is their kind expectation." Hence Mr. McTavish considers it "highly advisable that Mr. Archibald should be on the spot at least as soon as the troops."

Unfortunately for those who participated in the movement, he was not; hence the flight of Riel, Lépine and O'Donoghue, when they learnt the real

Because, forsooth, "inside of the fort were found several field-guns, some of which were mounted in the bastion and over the gateway, a large quantity of ammunition, and a number of old pattern muskets, many of which were loaded and capped, showing that the intention had been up to the last moment to resist the entry of the troops" (pp. 196, 197). Not being a captain, we know little of things military; but we had so far been under the impression that, especially in troubled times, guards were not wont to beat their rounds armed with empty muskets.

Again, capital has been made of the fact that the open fort was found without the British standard flowing over its walls. Yet it is locally well known that it had been taken down only the preceding night, and that its absence at the top of Fort Garry's flag-staff in the forenoon of Aug. 24, 1870, was due solely to the downpour of rain, which continued to fall till the arrival of the troops.

¹¹Report of the Select Committee, p. 36.

sentiments of the troops, who arrived within sight of Fort Garry in the morning of August 24, 1870.¹²

The advent of the soldiers was for the French halfbreeds of Manitoba the dawn of an era of active persecution at the hands of bigots from the east, which was to last a number of years and sorely tried their patience. Riel and Lépine were banished and the Government of Ontario offered a premium of five thousand dollars to anyone who would effect their capture, a circumstance which made life almost unbearable for them and led to several attempts at outrage. In spite of Wolseley's assurance that "his mission is one of peace," made at a time when he did not know how he would be received by Riel, the commander of the troops himself seems to have set the ball rolling, by calling him and his sympathizers *banditti* in a second proclamation issued when he had no longer anything to fear from him. It would be foreign to the scope of this work to expatiate on the indignities, assaults, murders, incendiary fires, continual threats, meted out to those who had concurred in wrenching the Manitoba Act from the Dominion of Canada. But we cannot conceal that the mainspring of such persecution was religious prejudice more than a sense of loyalty to the Crown. It arose from the resentment of Scott's brothers in fanaticism.

¹²A few authors, among whom Alex. Begg in his "History of the North-West" (vol. II, pp. 20, 21), make the troops enter Fort Garry on the 23rd of August, 1870.

In his first proclamation Colonel Wolseley had declared that his force represented "no party, either in religion or politics."¹³ Yet one of the first acts of some members of the First Ontario Rifles was to establish an Orange lodge, for which a warrant had been carried all through the Dawson route. It was organized within a fortnight after the arrival of that regiment, and the spirit which animated its founders is patent from the fact that they used for their first meeting "a small table taken previously from the room inside the fort in which Louis Riel slept. . . . Inside two years the lodge increased largely in members until, early in 1872, it contained upward of two hundred members, and was reckoned the largest lodge in the Dominion."¹⁴

The results of this anti-Catholic activity may easily be guessed. Yet the halfbreeds were not without protection. In the first place, Governor Archibald was really the right man in the right place. He soon became a warm friend of Bishop Taché, and by his prudence and forbearance, no less than by his open sympathy for the oppressed, he certainly averted calamities that would otherwise have burst upon the country.

And then, in prevision of the definite organization of the new province, the Bishop of St. Boniface had had the forethought of bringing from Quebec a little phalanx of young men, able and true, who almost

¹³Begg, "The Creation of Manitoba," p. 383.

¹⁴Hill, "History of Manitoba," pp. 587, 588.

immediately had a not inconsiderable share in the government of their adopted land. Prominent among them were Messrs. Joseph Dubuc, Marc A. Girard, Joseph Royal and Alphonse A. C. Lari-vière, who played most honourable rôles in the political arena of the young province.

We might now revert to the purely ecclesiastical history of Western Canada, after having somewhat tarried on the narration of events which have a right to a place in this work only in proportion to the extent the Church has been, rightly or wrongly, implicated in them, and because the chief actors in the same were her own children. Yet we feel that our account of the insurrection of 1869-70 would be incomplete, and the real character of the Catholic half-breeds but imperfectly sketched without an outline of events which transpired in their midst one year later, when a crisis arose which, but for the fidelity of the oppressed Catholics, might have resulted in a most important displacement of the political boundaries of the whole Canadian West.

Apart from the murder of Goulet, already mentioned, and the banishment of the Catholic leaders in the movement of protestation, a Mr. Tanner was killed by falling from his carriage, whose horse the soldiers from the east had wilfully frightened. Mr. André Nault, who had guarded the British flag against the rage of O'Donoghue, suffered on American soil repeated thrusts of Orange bayonets and was left for dead. Rowdies of the same hue went

so far as to threaten to kill "Big Taché" and to burn his house and church. Newcomers from Ontario forcibly took from a group of halfbreeds the lands they occupied at *Rivière aux Islets de Bois*. In short, as Governor Archibald wrote confidentially to Sir John Macdonald, "many of [the French halfbreeds] have been so beaten and outraged that they feel as if they were living in a state of slavery."¹⁵

We shall presently see how, under the guidance of their Church, these same men were to avenge themselves.¹⁶

It is certainly not beyond the bounds of probability that when, in 1867, the United States acquired Alaska they counted on some contingencies that would ultimately do away with the isolation of that Territory. There can scarcely be any doubt that they had in Assiniboia agents who closely watched the situation and strove to make it turn to their advantage. This was known at Ottawa and, as early as June 22, 1866, "the Executive Council of Canada expressed the opinion that the most inviting parts of the Territory [Assiniboia] would shortly be peopled by persons whom the Company were unable to control, and who would establish a government and tribunals of their own and assert their political independence."¹⁷

¹⁵Report Select Committee, p. 156.

¹⁶For a fuller account of what was to follow, the reader who is conversant with French is invited to consult our articles in *La Nouvelle France* (Quebec, 1907-08), "*Aux Sources de l'Histoire Manitobaine*."

¹⁷Blue Book, p. 171.

On March 8, 1868, that is, scarcely a year after the acquisition of the Russian possessions, the Legislature of Minnesota passed the following resolution: "We regret to be informed of a purpose to transfer the territory between Minnesota and Alaska to the Dominion of Canada by an order in council at London without a vote of Selkirk and the settlers upon the sources of the Saskatchewan River, who largely consist of emigrants from the United States; and we would respectfully urge that the President and the Congress of the United States shall represent to the Government of Great Britain that such an action will be an unwarrantable interference with the principles of self-government and cannot be regarded with indifference by the people of the United States."¹⁸

It was scarcely possible to confess in clearer language the covetousness of the Americans for the Canadian West. Hence the interest with which the least of Riel's sayings and doings were watched at the frontier, and the offer of immense sums of money, arms and ammunition,¹⁹ which came from the south, but were spurned by the so-called rebel.

Having failed to make him and his people waver in their fidelity to their Sovereign, when they were in power, the Fenians of the United States (who were but the tools, the vanguard of the American people of the north) thought that this loyalty must

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁹Bishop Taché in Select Committee, p. 42.

have vanished now that Riel had become an outlaw and his sympathizers were downtrodden by the invaders from Ontario. The invasion of Manitoba was therefore resolved upon by O'Donoghue and the other Fenian leaders.

Success was a matter of certainty provided the French population joined in the fray. They were known to be "excellent horsemen, accustomed to the use of arms, and to obey the leaders whom they themselves select, when they traverse the plains in search of the buffalo."²⁰ After the shedding of the first blood, they could have easily raised corps aggregating eight hundred or more choice men to be matched against the eighty soldiers that remained at Fort Garry "to preserve the peace of half a continent," as Governor Archibald had it.²¹ Moreover some two thousand workmen, with a large percentage of ex-soldiers who had seen fire in the Civil War, had just finished their work on railways within Minnesota. Most of them being now idle, they would have been delighted to lend their aid against the hated Britishers.

Speaking of one of the Fenian leaders, Tuttle, the continuator of Gunn, remarks that "he was almost certain of receiving a friendly reception from the French halfbreeds, while it was doubtful whether the English halfbreeds were so much in love with

²⁰Blue Book, p. 28.

²¹Select Committee, p. 140.

Canada as to fight on her behalf."²² According to the historian Hill, "O'Donoghue's plan was to cross the frontier with a body of armed men, compelling every man he met to accompany him, either as a prisoner or as a confederate, and thus swell his ranks till he reached the parish above the fort, which contained the main body of the population. These, he believed, would join him at once and aid in taking and plundering Fort Garry; when he would be reinforced with a sufficient number of men from the United States to enable him to hold the country."²³ In a public document the Lieutenant-Governor himself acknowledged that the French population, yesterday derided and oppressed, was now the key to the situation, as the Fenians believed it to be ready to fall into their arms and aid any invasion.²⁴

To make sure of this, however, O'Donoghue secretly dispatched a courier to the leaders at St. Vital, and, on Riel's advice, André Nault went with another to confer with the prospective invaders, as the Métis chief wished to ascertain the real aims of his quondam lieutenant at Fort Garry. In the greatest secrecy a meeting of the Fenian leaders was held in the house of a Charles Grant, some eighteen miles from the mouth of the Pembina River. They assured the delegates of the Manitoban Métis that they had already enlisted three thousand five hundred and

²²Gunn and Tuttle, "History of Manitoba," p. 470.

²³"History of Manitoba," pp. 337, 338.

²⁴Report of Select Committee, p. 147.

sixty men, had plenty of money and relied on plans of campaign which honest Nault could not help finding of a rather drastic nature. Yet he refrained from commenting on the same, promising only to give a faithful account of all he had heard to Louis Riel and friends.

Meantime the wildest rumours were being circulated in the new province, and the Orangemen who, but a month before were so loud in their denunciations of the "rebels," seemed unanimous in the belief that now was the time for the French to show their loyalty and earn at last the so much debated amnesty for past irregularities.

Bishop Taché had left for the east, but not before he had had a conversation, at St. Norbert, with Louis Riel, whom he sounded as to his real sentiments. The Métis leader declared to the prelate that he "hated the Fenians because they were a secret society and as such were condemned by the Church." At the same time he was in a quandary. "I cannot go forward and combat them," he remarked, "for those who will come after me [meaning the newcomers from the east] are sure to kill me."

But, convinced that "the country would be lost,"²⁵ if even part of the French turned against the provincial authorities, Lieutenant-Governor Archibald had an interview with Mr. Ritchot, the outcome of which was a letter dated October 4, 1871, wherein the latter expressed Riel's delicate position and the wish

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 90.

for a declaration of immunity from prosecution in case he should come out of his retirement. Archibald wrote on the morrow: "Should Mr. Riel come forward as suggested, he need be under no apprehension that his liberty be interfered with in any way. . . . It is hardly necessary for me to add that the coöperation of the French halfbreeds and their leaders in support of the Crown, under the present circumstances, will be very welcome."

On that very day (October 5th), thirteen of the most influential Métis met in Riel's house, at St. Vital. It has been the good fortune of the present writer to publish lately the minutes of that and all the following meetings, after the original record of the same, in Louis Riel's own handwriting, discovered by the most opportune of accidents as his house was undergoing repairs. We gather from the beginning of that document that the halfbreed leaders were, on the 5th of October, almost hourly expecting the return of André Nault. After the enumeration of the names of those who took part in the proceedings, the secretary to the meeting says: "No details on O'Donoghue;" and Nault who assisted at all the subsequent assemblies is not mentioned in the first.

Now, as the English historians could not well ignore the loyalty of the French halfbreeds in that terrible emergency, they have generally stooped to the unfair expedient of insinuating, or even plainly stating, that they offered their services only when

they knew that they were no more needed.²⁶ After the discovery of the above mentioned papers, all historians who have any regard for truth will have to revise the dicta of their predecessors on that score.

O'Donoghue, with four of his "generals," was captured near the boundary on October 5th. The first meeting of the Métis leaders took place at 11 A.M. of the same day, and though absolutely nothing could then be known of the O'Donoghue fizzle, twelve out of thirteen halfbreeds (among whom was Riel) declared themselves in favour of assisting the Provincial Government against the invaders.

At 9 A.M. of the following day nothing had as yet transpired concerning the Fenian reverse. Nay, André Nault and companion, just arrived, reported that "Fort Pembina must have been captured since Wednesday morning. . . . O'Donoghue wanted the coöperation of the Métis for the success of the Declaration of Independence of the country; he had money and in time he could introduce five men into the country as against Canada's one."²⁷

This was indeed encouraging. Did the Métis chiefs swerve on that account from their allegiance to the Sovereign whose fellow subjects had been "treating them like slaves"? The majority (Riel,

²⁶See Hill, p. 346; Gunn and Tuttle, p. 471. Bryce fails to mention in any of his books the part played by the Métis in the Fenian Raid.

²⁷*Aux Sources de l'Histoire Manitoiraine*, p. 108.

A. D. Lépine, E. de la Gimodière, Honourable Dauphinais, Angus McKay) were warmly in favour of the legitimate authority, whilst the others, without exception, were loyal, though they did not manifest such enthusiasm. The assembly decided that "courjers must immediately be dispatched in all directions" to convoke local assemblies of the people and persuade them to side with the Government."

It were superfluous to proceed with the details of those assemblies. As a result of the agitation, companies of halfbreed soldiers were formed at St. Boniface, White Horse Plains, Pointe des Chênes, Ste. Agathe, Pointe Coupée, St. Norbert and St. Vital, all with a view to assist the Government against the invaders who were known to be concentrating their forces at St. Joseph, near the boundary, where all authors (and Governor Archibald) say that everybody was sure they were going to renew the attack in a much more serious manner. On October 7th, Riel formally offered by letter the services of his forces, and, after having thanked him (October 8th) for his loyalty and that of his men, the governor purposely crossed the river to review at St. Boniface some three or four hundred of them led by the ex-President of the Provisional Government and his adjutant, A. D. Lépine. Shortly thereafter some of them were actually sent to meet the prospective invaders from St. Joseph.

But, on hearing of this most unexpected stand taken by the French, the Fenians lost heart, and

the Canadian West was saved to the British Crown. "If the halfbreeds had taken a different course, I do not believe the province would now be in our possession." It is no less a personage than Lieutenant-Governor Archibald himself who says so, in his sworn deposition before the Select Committee of 1874.²⁸

The teaching of the Church had borne good fruit, and the advice of her priests who "were opposed to annexation"²⁹ had not been given in vain.

²⁸Report Select Committee, p. 153. Independently of the lately discovered documents, evidence is not lacking in the deposition of that upright man to prove Riel's perfect loyalty and constant straightforwardness at the time of that crisis. Thus he has (p. 146) the following most important statement: "Father Ritchot had informed me that everything was going on satisfactorily, but I desired to inform my mind from different and independent sources. There were a number of French who never sided with, and were never personal friends of, Riel, and I got information from these to the effect that Riel attended a meeting at White Horse Plains, about a week before the invasion, and did his best to induce the people to turn out and join the Government; that nothing was decided at that meeting, but that two or three days afterwards a meeting was held at the same place, at which Riel took the same view; that then there was an arrangement that all should meet at St. Vital on the next day, 4th October; that they did then meet, and then Riel took the same line, and it was finally decided by all but two of the meeting that they should join the Government and come out. "The two refusing had been assaulted at Winnipeg, and it was with them a personal matter."

²⁹Blue Book, p. 81. See also Report Select Committee, p. 140.



GOV. ARCHIBALD WELCOMING RIEL AND HIS TROOPS

PART V

Later Developments East of the Rockies

CHAPTER XXVI.

ORGANIZATION OF ST. BONIFACE PROVINCE.

1870-1874.

The mustard seed planted by Provencher had by this time become a tree of respectable dimensions. Not only had its growth been rapid since the arrival of the Oblates on the western plains, but offshoots of the same, whose branches reached out to the frozen sea, the Rocky Mountains and Hudson Bay, encompassing tribes of all kinds and languages, had gradually sprung up from its roots. These were now to be organized by the Supreme Husbandman with such relations towards one another as should prevent overcrowding and mutual interference. In a few words, the See of St. Boniface, for years lonely in its western solitude, after having been given a satellite in the shape of the Vicariate-Apostolic of Athabasca-Mackenzie, was soon to be raised in God's hierarchy and to receive two other suffragans.

Chronologically speaking, we have now reached

this important stage in the development of the Western Church. But the interests of clearness and unity of narrative having forced us to neglect some events or incidents which had no connection with the Red River troubles or their aftermath, we shall now slightly retrograde in our recital of the Church's doings in the north and middle west of Canada.

The reader may not have entirely forgotten the special fields entrusted to the care of the principal labourers in the Lord's vineyard. Under the immediate jurisdiction of Bishop Grandin in his capacity of an Oblate superior, Father Leduc directed, in 1870, the episcopal residence of St. Albert and the adjacent missions, building that same year a new church at headquarters which he fondly styles "a veritable monument, thanks to the excellent Brother Bowes, who made the plans and executed them."¹ Father Dupin was at St. Paul of the Crees, devoting himself to the salvation of Indians whose docility was not always up to what the missionary had a right to expect, while Fathers André and Bourguine were following the halfbreed hunters in their chase of the buffalo. Végreville had the important mission of Lac la Biche for his share. The older post of Ste. Anne was in the hands of a young priest, Father Fourmond, who had made his vows the preceding year (April 21, 1869). At Ile à la Crosse presided Father Légeard who, in spite of an unsatisfactory

¹*Missions des O. M. I.*, vol. XL, p. 195.

state of health, exerted himself on behalf of the Chippewayans and Crees attending that oldest among the northern missions, and endeavouring gradually to overcome the ravages of fire in his establishment. In the Far East, Father Gasté, ably seconded by Father Legoff, was ruling the poor mission of St. Peter on Lake Caribou, and occasionally pushed on as far as the dreary shores of Hudson Bay, where he visited (for the first time on April 21, 1868), stray bands of Eskimos, for whom, however, he could do little owing to his ignorance of their language.

On March 9, 1870, he was himself delighted by the arrival of his vicar of missions, Bishop Grandin, who had been on a series of episcopal visitations ever since December 28th of the preceding year, when he had left his residence of St. Albert for Lake Caribou.

Last, not least, Father Lacombe, always indefatigable in his zeal for the welfare of souls, was hurrying from place to place, preaching retreats and superintending the victualling of the missions, when he was not accompanying his wayward children of the plains. On the first of February of that year (1870) we see him sally out from St. Albert and search for his people as they themselves look for buffalo. Many days does he spend in the lone prairies of what has been called Alberta after him.² Finally his perseverance is rewarded with success.

²As we have seen, St. Albert (which he founded) was named after his own patron saint, and the new province after that mission.

Yonder, not far from the horizon, an immense camp is sighted. His white flag with red cross in hand, the veteran priest makes for the human agglomeration, whose nationality he does not even care to ascertain. Lacombe is loved and respected by all; what matters it to him whether the strangers in sight are Crees or Blackfeet? Is he not the father of either?

In the present case it is the Blackfeet that greet him as they recognize his little flag. "The divine man has come! Him whose heart is good I love," he hears on all sides as he alights. Three full weeks does he stay with his people, leading their primitive life and sharing alike their hard and good fortunes. The Indians happen to be well disposed; he improves his opportunities by addressing them daily on religious topics, teaching them prayers and hymns, while he also perfects himself in his knowledge of their dialect.

This devotedness of the Catholic missionaries is recognized even by their born adversaries. Just at the time that Lacombe and his brother Oblates were thus sacrificing themselves on the altar of a self-imposed duty, a writer of renown, who sedulously keeps his own religious persuasions as a Catholic in the background and is not always fair to the bulk of those who professed the same in the Middle West, the author of "The Great Lone Land," prefaces by the following words a quotation from a publication emanating from a Protestant body

"A few miles northwest of Edmonton a settlement composed exclusively of French halfbreeds is situated on the shores of a rather extensive lake which bears the name of the Grand Lac, or St. Albert. This settlement is presided over by a mission of French Roman Catholic clergymen of the Order of Oblates, headed by a bishop of the same Order and nationality. It is a curious contrast to find in this distant and strange land men of culture and high mental excellence devoting their lives to the task of civilizing the wild Indians of the forest and the prairie—going far in advance of the settler, whose advent they have but too much cause to dread. I care not what may be the form of belief which the on-looker may hold—whether it be in unison or in antagonism with that faith preached by these men; but he is only a poor semblance of a man who can behold such a sight through the narrow glass of sectarian feeling and see in it nothing but the self-interested labour of persons holding opinions foreign to his own. He who has travelled through the vast colonial empire of Britain—that empire which covers one-third of the entire habitable surface of the globe and probably half of the lone lands of the world—must often have met with men dwelling in the midst of wild, savage peoples whom they tended with a strange and mother-like devotion. If you asked who was this stranger who dwelt thus among wild men in these wild places, you were told he was the French missionary; and if you sought him in his lonely hut,

you found ever the same surroundings, the same simple evidences of a faith which seemed more than human. I do not speak from hearsay or book knowledge. I have myself witnessed the scenes I now try to recall. And it has ever been the same, east and west, far in advance of trader or merchant, of sailor or soldier, has gone this dark-haired, fragile man, whose earliest memories are thick with sunny scenes by bank of Loire or vine-clad slope of Rhone or Garonne, and whose vision in this life, at least, is never destined to rest again upon these oft-remembered places. Glancing through a pamphlet one day at Edmonton, a pamphlet which recorded the progress of a Canadian Wesleyan missionary society, I read the following extract from the letter of a western missionary: 'These representatives of the Man of Sin, these priests are hard workers; summer or winter they follow the camps, suffering great privations. They are indefatigable in their efforts to make converts. But their converts,' he adds, 'have never heard of the Holy Ghost.'"¹⁸

Even the gravest Cato will, no doubt, indulge in a broad smile at this last assertion, which, we are sorry to say, is but a fair specimen of the reliability of too many sectarian publications. Are we then to suppose from that remark of the Wesleyan writer, that the Catholics of Alberta were taught to mention only the Father and the Son while making the sign of the cross?

¹⁸"The Great Lone Land," pp. 261, 262.

We repeat that it is sad to have to take to task for their reckless assertions books issued by the professional teachers of truthfulness. But the wild statement quoted by Gen. Butler is far from being alone in its glaring falsehood. Others there are which are all the more misleading as they are of a less startling nature. For instance, one Anglican missionary whose arrival in the Far North we have already chronicled, the Rev. Wm. C. Bompas, in a booklet on the (Anglican) "Diocese of Mackenzie River,"⁴ unhesitatingly makes the most astounding declarations concerning the proportion of Catholics and Protestants within that territory. Similarly exaggerated and unreliable data furnished by sympathizers have likewise resulted in a readable life of that unique character, which unfortunately presents but a one-sided picture, lights without shadows.⁵

Far be it from us to detract in the least from the credit for zeal and good intentions due to any non-Catholic missionary. God alone is judge of intentions, and nobody else can properly weigh the amount of good accomplished by man. We are pre-

⁴London, 1888.

⁵"An Apostle of the North," by Rev. H. A. Cody, B.A., New York, 1908. The "Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada" (vol. XIII, p. 180) cannot help finding the Life of Bishop Bompas "the work of an ardent admirer," and believes that "the note of admiration is perhaps overdone" in it. The same review, speaking of Bompas' interpretation of the Bible, finds it "sometimes a little fanciful." Those of a different faith who have known personally that unique figure will scarcely be so euphemistic in their appreciation of its idiosyncracies. They will none the less pray that the long labours of the Anglican Churchman on behalf of a cause he believed to be that of God, may win him mercy at the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge.

pared to give to Mr. Bompas and colleagues credit for the best of intentions, and we will not deny that they gave evidence of great activity, but we wish that activity had been of a less destructive nature. They might have attempted to make good Christians according to their lights without unceasingly destroying what little faith remained in the castaways of Catholicism and others by endless attacks on "superstitions," which were such only because grossly distorted by their own minds.⁶

By his peculiar idiosyncracies, especially during the first years of his career, Rev. Mr. Bompas acquired a notoriety which detracted not a little from his usefulness as a Christian minister. Who will be bold enough to declare that, with all his zeal on behalf of the Church of England, he was at all scrupulous in the exposition of her tenets or the administration of her sacraments? Had he acted on the banks of the Thames as he did on those of the Mackenzie, we doubt if he would have passed muster as an orthodox Churchman even in his own communion, comprehensive and "broad" in its doctrines as it is.

In 1870, he had transported the seat of his operations to Fort McPherson, near the territory of the Eskimos, after having made himself the butt of

⁶As we will see in our last part, Bompas had occasion to pass through the north of B. C., where the present writer spent 22 years. The Indians of those wilds still repeat with derision his caution given in an eastern Déné dialect, that "these (meaning their crosses) are nothing but brass, and God is not brass, but a spirit," as if he had naively thought them capable of believing anything else.

chaff among the natives in the south. Here is how Father Petitot describes one of his exploits:

"Dressed as a *bourgeois*, a black satchel full of tracts slung over his shoulder, and a glass of clear water in his hand, you see him going from lodge to lodge, asking everyone whether he wishes to be baptized. Later he did better still. Having persuaded a young couple to allow themselves to be christened, he convoked the English-speaking personnel of Fort McPherson in the large hall, and then addressing the cook:

"'Anderson,' he said, 'have you got any water in the kitchen?'

"'No, sir.'

"'Well, then, give me some snow in a cup.'

"Having received the snow, he pours thereon the contents of a teapot that awaits the breakfast table by the fireside, and this snow mixed with tea and not yet melted he throws into the face of the two catechumens, who shake themselves like ducks, the officiant saying at the same time: 'William, Margaret. Amen.' This is his entire formula of baptism and in this consisted the whole of his august ceremony which excited general hilarity. A moment later, the clerk of the fort came in and drank the baptismal water of the minister, which he drew from the same source, the teapot."

Who could blame the Catholic missionaries for having done all they could to nullify the action of

such men, who deluded their followers into the belief that they had become Christians because they had received, with a name, some half-melted snow in the face; who, instead of instilling into the minds of the depraved sentiments of sorrow and a firm purpose of self-amendment, were constantly harping on the sinfulness of praying for help to the Mother of God and wearing the emblem of our redemption and the images of God's friends?⁸

The same Father Petitot, who tells us of Bompas' antics, forgets to mention the legendary Bible which the preacher generally wore suspended from his neck, ever ready to supply English texts to Indians who did not understand a word of that language.

Petitot crossed the Rockies in 1870 in the hope of improving on the work of his confrère Father Séguin among the Loucheux of the Yukon. Leaving Fort McPherson on June 17th, he went as far as Fort Yukon. But the results of his exertions were futile, and his life was only endangered among the Indians, through the undisguised hostility of the Protestant traders and their employees. Brought up with ridiculously false ideas of the priests and their religion, the Indians would have nothing to do with them, though after a while they deplored the

⁸According to Father Petitot, between themselves Revs. Bompas and Kirkby "made but one baptism in three years, and it was that of a bigamous Indian named Kaya, whom I expelled from the Church on account of his obduracy." (*Missions des O. M. I.*, vol. VIII, p. 288). This was written in 1868. Later on Mr. Kirkby converted (!) one Loucheux, price (according to the same authority) one plough, a pair of oxen, tea, sugar and flour. (*Ibid.*, p. 292).

fact that the Black Gown had come after the minister, inasmuch as they professed to be ill-treated by the latter, whom they accused of undue severity and even violence when certain Church regulations were concerned.

Meanwhile, Séguin was feeding his Loucheux flock at Good Hope; Eynard and Laity vied with each other at the Nativity; Grouard periodically sallied out from his post at Fort des Liards in search of souls to save, and at St. Joseph's, on Great Slave Lake, Gascon was still mourning the loss of Bro. Hand who, on August 23, 1869, had perished by drowning as he was taking up the fish nets of the mission.

Sadder still was the position of the missionaries at St. Albert during that eventful year, 1870. Small-pox had again broken out among the natives and halfbreeds, whose ranks it was thinning to an alarming extent. As a result of their exertions among the stricken flock, both Fathers Leduc and Bourguine caught the dread disease. This was enough to make devoted Father Lacombe fly to their assistance. Soon Ste. Anne's Mission was also invaded by the scourge. Fathers and sisters then multiplied themselves on behalf of the sick, and even the two future priests, Scholastic Brothers Doucet and Blanchet, were prostrated by the unsparing visitor.

In spite of all care, five of the orphans brought up by the sisters died, and it is of record that Father Fourmond was so untiring in his ministrations to the

stricken that, in the space of two months, he did not undress once in taking his sleep. In a few weeks, one hundred and twenty persons succumbed to the disease at that single place. Bishop Grandin was then at Ile à la Crosse. On hearing of the affliction of his people, he immediately returned west, to help his priests and console the survivors.

One of the Indians who had been severely bereaved in his family then threw himself at the feet of the prelate and, after having recited a Pater and an Ave in his own tongue, thus addressed him: "Great Chief of the Prayer, pray for me, for I am indeed wretched. Sickness has taken away six of my children. Only this one is left me and even he is in a pitiful state. I have nobody but him to take care of me, and thou seest that he is very sick. I am not angry against the Great Spirit, who has deprived me of my five boys and of my only daughter. In spite of that I thank Him; but do pray to Him that He may save me at least this one."¹⁰

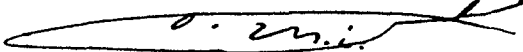
The boy was apparently dying; yet the faith of his father was rewarded, and his son revived. Still farther west, at a great distance, some fifteen families camped in the vicinity of Fort Jasper, in the Rocky Mountains, were attacked with the plague and asked for succour. Without a moment's hesitation Father Leduc left his own sadly tried flock and went to dispense among them the consolations of religion.

It was in the following year (1871) that was con-

¹⁰*Missions des O. M. I.*, vol. XI., p. 201.

summated the act of authority by the Supreme Pastor whereby was created the ecclesiastical province of St. Boniface. That important measure had been in preparation ever since May, 1868, when the Fathers of the Fourth Provincial Council of Quebec recognized its advisability. On the other hand, Bishop Grandin had to a great extent contributed to its realization by his humility. In the troubled state of the St. Boniface diocese—which bade fair to become chronic owing to the constant provocations of incoming settlers—he found a valid reason for declining the future succession of Bishop Taché, in spite of his title of coadjutor *cum futurâ successionē*.

Adieu ami devot.

Alex. Arch. de St. Bonif.


ARCHBISHOP TACHE'S SIGNATURE.

A memoir on the territory which it was proposed to detach from the diocese of Saint Boniface was sent (June 17, 1871), to Cardinal Barnabo, prefect of the Propaganda, wherein Bishops Taché and Grandin stated that "fifteen missionaries, one Canadian and fourteen French, all Oblates, labour in the proposed diocese of Saint Albert," and that within the same

district "there are five primary schools attended solely by Catholics."

Pursuant to these representations, St. Boniface became, September 22, 1871, a Metropolitan See, with three suffragans, namely, the newly created Bishop of St. Albert (Monseigneur Grandin), the Vicars-Apostolic of Athabasca-Mackenzie (Monseigneur Faraud) and of British Columbia. All the dignitaries of those ecclesiastical divisions were Oblates.

The most important missionary station of the Northwest, as regards natural resources, was that of Lac la Biche. After a prolonged correspondence between Grandin and Taché on the one hand, and the General Administration of the Oblates on the other, it had been temporarily put under the jurisdiction of Monseigneur Faraud, owing to its unparalleled advantages as a base of supplies for the northern missions. This arrangement came to an end in 1889, when that establishment reverted to the diocese of St. Albert.

As a complement to the new organization, Archbishop Taché was invested with the pallium on June 24, 1872, by Vicar-General Thibault, specially delegated for the circumstance.

Ever since he had been consecrated, Mgr. Taché, walking in the foot-steps of his predecessor, had been a great friend and protector of education. Schools flourished on the east side of the Red River and along the Assiniboine, but there were none for

OUR LADY'S PROMISE

To Blessed Alanus, O. P.

"Those who propagate my Rosary shall be helped by me in all their necessities."

"Those who are truly devout in reciting my Rosary, shall not die without the Sacraments."



THE ROSARY GROUP

V. Queen of the most Holy Rosary, pray for us:

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, whose only-begotten Son, by His life, death, and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life: grant, we beseech Thee, that, meditating upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Very Rev. M. J. RIPPLE, O.P., P.G.,
Editor-in-Chief.

the few Catholics on the Fort Garry side of the former. In 1869 the prelate had filled the want by appointing two sisters (Ste. Thérèse and McDougall) to teach the young of what was soon to become the town of Winnipeg. Rooms had been rented for that purpose in a cottage belonging to a Mr. Drever, and a school opened on the first of May of the same year. The building having been soon after acquired by Mgr. Taché, the bishop said therein the first mass celebrated within the limits of Winnipeg (June 15, 1869). At the same time Rev. Joseph McCarthy, O.M.I., a young priest ordained at St. Boniface, January 24, 1869, was appointed pastor of the Catholics of Fort Garry and vicinity, though he continued to reside with his bishop.

Such were the beginnings of the now flourishing parish of St. Mary's and of the academy of the same name, both of which were even then placed under the patronage of the Mother of God.

While he was thus watching over the interests of his English-speaking children, Mgr. Taché was far from forgetting the French. Since the troubles accompanying the admission of the province into the Dominion, these people had become the usual target for the vilest attacks at the hands of fanatics. The necessity of having an organ to defend their cause in the eyes of the civilized world led to the foundation of *Le Métis*, a weekly paper which was first issued on May 27, 1871, under the editorship of

Mr. Joseph Royal, and did yeoman service in the interests of justice and Catholicism.

In November of the following year, the Federal authorities gave a token of good-will towards Catholic Manitobans by sending them as judge of the Supreme Court Mr. Louis Bétournay, who had previously been in partnership with Sir George Cartier, at Montreal. That gentleman was on the Bench to the day of his death, which occurred on November 30, 1879.

The *Métis* newspaper contributed towards keeping well before the public eye the great question of amnesty covering any possible irregularity in 1870, though Mgr. Taché personally did more by way of correspondence, visits to high parties and published pamphlets. No question was ever so near his heart, and it is really most wonderful to behold the dogged perseverance with which he followed it until he had brought it to a comparatively satisfactory termination. His extreme devotion to the interests of the halfbreeds was no doubt the prime motor in this campaign of three years' duration, though we cannot conceal the fact that his own veracity being implicitly impeached by the politicians, it became, as it were, a matter of personal honour for the prelate.

Now that they were no more in need of the bishop's services, high parties at Ottawa were as bold in their denial of any formal promises of such a measure having been made as they had been prodigal of the same when he was considered the only

person able to quell the disturbances. In a petition to the Queen, dated February 8, 1872, Rev. Mr. Ritchot assured Her Majesty that a full amnesty had been promised him for all persons implicated in the late troubles, and his co-delegate of the Northwest people, Mr. Alfred A. Scott, confirmed that statement over his signature. This declaration was renewed under oath by the former in an affidavit made before a magistrate on November 19, 1873. The historian, Benjamin Sulte, who was Sir George Cartier's private secretary during the negotiations, in his sworn deposition (May 20, 1874), assured the Select Committee that such a promise had really been made to Mr. Ritchot in his own hearing.¹⁰ The Hon. Mr. Royal swore that he had been told by Sir George to write to Riel that "the amnesty had been decided on," and that "the thing was done."¹¹ The archbishop himself was no less certain that he had personally received similar assurances. Yet nothing could avail. Orangeism was then rampant, and one of the ministers declared that "no government could stand five minutes if it took up that question, and that they were not bound to commit suicide."¹² So the Cabinet and even the Governor-General chose to deny what so many respectable parties swore to.

Inasmuch as they represented the people of Manitoba, the provincial authorities were less bigoted,

¹⁰Report of Select Committee, p. 181.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 88.

and at times a majority of their number were even Catholics. Thus, on July 3, 1874, the Clarke Government having resigned as an outcome of an adverse vote, the Hon. Mr. Girard was called upon to form a new administration. He therefore became Premier of Manitoba, with Mr. Jos. Dubuc as Attorney-General, and Mr. James McKay as President of the Council. The latter was also a Catholic, a generous friend of the archbishop, who had left Presbyterianism when twenty-nine years of age in order to join the Church. In conjunction with Messrs. J. A. N. Provencher, Charles Nolin and others, he had already rendered valuable services to the country while engaged in negotiating treaties with various bands of Indians.

But outside influences were at work in the province, which had sworn to wreak revenge on those who had shared in the execution of Scott. They could not lay hands on Riel; but Ambrose D. Lépine, who had shown himself one of the warmest supporters of Canada at the time of the Fenian scare, was arrested on September 27, 1873, and, in spite of a brilliant defence by Messrs. Dubuc, Girard and Royal, he was condemned to death (November 4, 1874). But at the earnest prayer of Archbishop Taché, his sentence was commuted to two years' imprisonment. On May 27th of the same year, the defender of the British flag, André Nault, was also arrested, while three days later Elzéar Lagimodière met with a similar fate. They were duly tried, but

the jury disagreed, and the partial amnesty, which was proclaimed April 23, 1875, stopped all further proceedings against them. Riel was by the same condemned to a five years' banishment.

The bishops of the Far North had not the intrigues or bad faith of the politicians to contend against. These were replaced by the reckless statements of the Protestant ministers. Nothing daunted by the failures of Séguin and Petitot, Mgr. Clut undertook in 1872 a long voyage to the Yukon and even the Pacific coast of Alaska. In the company of the Rev. Mr. Lecorre, a young priest who belonged as yet to the secular clergy, he left Providence on August 30th. From the start he experienced the ill-will of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose representative claimed there was no room for him in his boat—perhaps because some had been found for Mr. Bompas, who was to cross the Rocky Mountains by the same opportunity. Fortunately, Mr. Gaudet, a French Canadian Catholic, gave a canoe to the missionaries, who were thus enabled to repair to Fort Yukon. There they found Mr. F. Mercier in charge, with Messrs. Dufresne and Hanover, all good Catholics, who could not, however, undo what the adversaries of Catholicism had done by their calumnies. All through the Yukon, the ministers had assured the Indians that it was the Catholic priests who had put Jesus Christ to death, and that this was the reason for their foolish fondness for the crucifix. As this objection was being constantly raised against

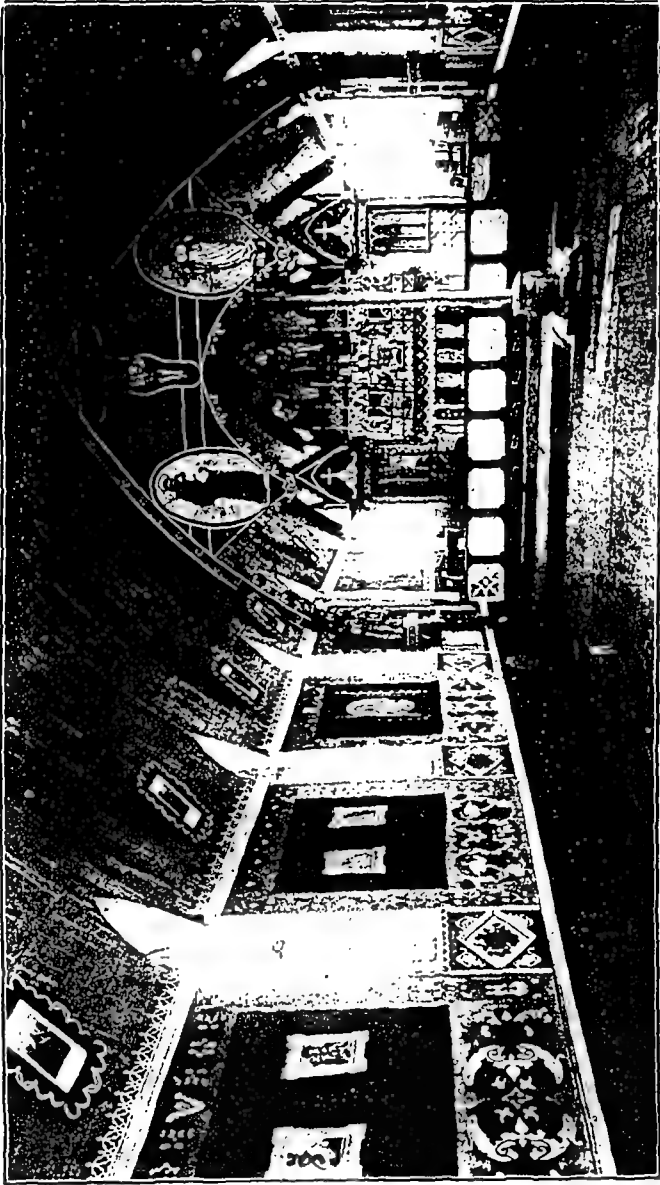
their preaching, Mr. Lecorre publicly asked Mr. Bompas whether he was really the author of the accusation, as all the natives assured him was the case. The minister denied it; but when cornered by the young priest, he declined to tell the Indians in their own language that those who made such a charge were not telling the truth. Whereupon, after remarks on the Blessed Virgin and the saints, as well as the respect due to the emblem of our redemption, Mr. Bompas was left by his indignant interlocutor in a state of mind which was far from comfortable.¹³

Some time after that controversial bout, it was rumoured that, uneasy after his castigation at Fort Yukon, Mr. Bompas intended to descend in the spring (1873) to an important place called Newklukayet. To forestall him the bishop went down himself and was the first Catholic missionary to enter Alaska. His visit was not entirely fruitless, but he soon realized that even there the natives had been prejudiced against his ministry.

On May 23rd, about one hundred and thirty Tananas, "the least civilized Indians" the bishop had ever seen, arrived, all in leather garments and bedecked with beads, porcupine quills and dirt. They landed to the accompaniment of special aboriginal ceremonies, wherein chants and dances were chiefly conspicuous. Alas! even these genuine savages had three times seen a Protestant minister!

On June 4th, Mgr. Clut left for St. Michael's, on

¹³*Missions*, vol. XIII., p. 290.



INTERIOR OF CHURCH AT FORT GOOD HOPE



an island of the Pacific, and on July 7th he bade farewell to the coast, bound for the Mackenzie, leaving on the way Mr. Lecorre at Nulatto. It was his intention to establish permanent posts along the great Alaskan river; but a closer study of official documents led to the conviction that the former Russian possessions in America were under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Bishop of Vancouver Island.

On September 6, 1873, Mgr. Clut arrived at Good Hope; and on October 9th he was again in sight of his house at Providence. A little incident will tell of the difficulties of communication with the civilized world in that northwest corner of America. On January 30, 1873, Father Petitot received at Good Hope a letter from the agent of the commercial firm of Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., which was an answer to a communication dated June, 1870.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TRAGIC DEATHS.

1874-1875.

Side by side with the question of the amnesty, and long after this had been settled, the question of Catholic colonization was uppermost in the thoughts of Archbishop Taché. With the opening of his adopted country to the overwhelming streams of settlers from various parts of the world, he understood that, unless special efforts were made to bring in Catholics from the east and the United States, his flock would soon be swamped by a wave of immigration which would preclude those common religious or national interests so necessary to a homogeneous society. It was even then difficult to obtain the rights of his people: what would it be when they would have become an insignificant minority in their own land?

Immediately after the incorporation of Manitoba within the Confederation of Canada, there were in the new province 5,452 Catholics, against 4,841 Protestants—the religion of 1,935 could not be ascertained. But very soon this numerical majority of Taché's co-religionists was a thing of the past, and though at first their representation in the local legislature was as large as that of the non-Catholics, the

proportion of Catholics to Protestants in the country was to decrease every year.

It cannot be denied that had the extreme gravity of the question been fully grasped in the east, thousands who yearly repaired to the manufactories of New England in search of some sort of betterment in their condition, at the risk of sinking therein their nationality and, at times, even their faith, would have emigrated to the Canadian West, and powerfully assisted in maintaining the influence of Catholics there. This emigration would have rendered impossible the spoliation of their rights which was to darken the last years of the patriotic archbishop.

Thanks to his exertions, however, a current of Catholic immigration, French for the most part and, alas! but too weak, brought a few hundreds of settlers to the western plains, which resulted in the formation of new centres of Catholic activity. Thus was founded in 1872 the parish of Ste. Agathe, which was first granted a resident priest (1873) in the person of Rev. Jean-Baptiste Proulx. Arrived in Manitoba in the course of 1870, that gentleman was to return to Quebec in 1874. In 1873 another new post received the visit of a priest. This was Our Lady of Lorette, near Ste. Anne des Chênes, where Rev. David Joseph Fillion (arrived September 22, 1874), made his first appearance on the first of November of that year. On the departure of Mr. Proulx, Fillion became parish priest of Ste. Agathe (October, 1874), and on the following sixth of January Rev.

Cyrille Samoisette was ordained with a view to becoming the assistant of that valiant priest in his work of organizing new parishes.

Nearer home, a regular city was springing up which, though Protestant in the majority of its inhabitants, claimed none the less the attention of the Church, on account of its commanding position and the importance to which it was destined. Every reader has already named Winnipeg, which in 1874 had risen from a hamlet of less than a hundred souls, its population in 1869, to a town of almost 5,000.

Rev. Jean-Baptiste Baudin, O.M.I., on his arrival (September, 1872), from the eastern States, replaced Father McCarthy in the charge of the Catholics of the new capital of the Middle West. In 1873 the convent chapel was already much too small. In the spring of the following year a building was put up on a piece of land given by the Hudson's Bay Company which combined the advantages of a church with those of a presbytery. The latter was on the first floor and the former occupied the second. At the same time, the place became a regular residence of the Oblates, with Father Lacombe as superior and Father Baudin as parish priest.

This building was blessed by the archbishop on May 30, 1874, in presence of a large concourse of the faithful. An eloquent sermon was preached by Rev. Father Th. Lavoie, then at the head of St. Boniface College, assisted by three professors. Among the congregation the old-timers could remark the cos-

tume of a new teaching Order of nuns, whom Father Lacombe had just brought (July 22nd), from Montreal. These were the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, who henceforth took the place of the Grey Nuns at St. Mary's Academy, and have ever since met with such uniform success at Winnipeg, St. Boniface and elsewhere. The first representatives of the new Institute in the Middle West were Sisters Cadieux, Duhamel, Lynch and Nault. The archdiocese of St. Boniface counted already not less than eighteen Catholic schools.

As if to show that the missionaries were the disciples of the "God of sciences" as well as the preachers of Christ crucified, two of them were just taking an honourable place among the philologists of the time. We have had occasion to mention several books published in the native languages for the benefit of the natives themselves. This time the works issued were intended for their pastors and for scientists at large. They consisted, in the first place, of a Grammar and Dictionary of the Cree language, a work of XX—894 pages, due to the persevering labours of Father Lacombe and published mostly at the expense of the Federal Government.

It had barely appeared when another missionary, endowed with a remarkable scientific turn of mind, Father Petitot, passed through Canada on his way to France, where he published the following year (1875) a Grammar and Dictionary of three Déné dialects LXXXV—367 folio pages with verbal para-

digms on folding leaves; an Eskimo Vocabulary and affherent Grammatical Notes; a most learned and well-written account of the geography of northern Canada, together with several monographs on its aborigines, bristling with valuable information, all of which were recognized by the French Government and divers learned societies. At the first International Congress of Americanists held in Nancy (September, 1875), the erudite author of these works played easily the most important rôle, and went a long way to convince the cabinet savants that thenceforth the last work on American ethnological matters belonged to the missionaries.

A meeting of a very different nature, the General Chapter of the Oblates, had assembled in France the representatives of the western missions (1873). They did not return alone. It is to the displacements occasioned by its sessions that we trace the acquisition of several new missionaries: Father Doucet, destined for the missions of Athabasca-Mackenzie; Father Hugonard, who was to have such a long career as educator of the Indians in the archdiocese of St. Boniface; and, accompanying Bishop Grandin, Fathers Brunet and Bonnald; while two scholastics remained in eastern Canada to complete their studies, after which they became respectively Father Henri Grandin (a nephew of the prelate of the same name), and Father Dauphin. Six lay brothers, professed or novices, belonged likewise to the bishop's party.

This was in 1874. The preceding year another ecclesiastic had been ordained who had come as early as 1870 with Bishop Clut; we mean Father Albert Pascal, whom we shall have occasion to mention honourably in connection with the establishment of a new division in the northern missions.

We have also named Father Bonnard. That young priest had scarcely reached his destination, St. Albert, when he came in contact with a striking instance of the dangers that beset the wayfarer in the western solitudes. In the service of the mission was a devoted French Canadian, Louis Dazé by name, who, for perhaps a score of years, was assisting the missionaries without any other remuneration than the sense of good done for the love of God. By the middle of November, 1874, he accompanied a priest for whom he, one day, set out on a buffalo hunting expedition some distance from an Indian camp, where the said missionary was exercising his ministry. One of those terrible snowstorms against which there is no protection outside of habitations on the Canadian plains, arose shortly after. When seen again the devoted layman was frozen stiff, after having walked five or six days, without eating, in the teeth of the gale. He was but five minutes' walk from an Indian camp which his failing strength did not allow him to reach. The missionaries mourned him as one might a brother.

This untimely end followed by one year a sudden death which was even more deplorable and was at

the same time the prelude of a third of a still more tragic nature. We have had many occasions to mention Father Eynard, of the northern missions. His had been a rather checkered career. Born at Genoa, May 21, 1824, of parents hailing from the south of France, he made his classical studies at the Lesser Seminary of Embrun and finished them up in the local University College, where he graduated with high honours. He then entered the famous Polytechnic School of Paris, after which he was admitted into the French Administration of Rivers and Forests.

His passage at the last mentioned institution had caused a complete eclipse of his faith, which ended, when Mr. Eynard was still an official of the French Government, in an irrevocable return to God. His fervour in the fulfilment of his religious duties was so great and his practice of the Christian virtues so remarkable, that he ultimately left the world for the ecclesiastical state, and then for the still more perfect life of a missionary bound by vows of religion. These he pronounced in the Congregation of the Oblates on November 1, 1854. May 24, 1855, he was ordained a priest. We know something of his career among the natives of America.

After a long sojourn at Great Slave Lake, at Providence and at St. Michael's, Bishop Faraud had called him to the Nativity, on Lake Athabasca, to replace his own coadjutor, Mgr. Clut. Pursued by insomnia, Father Eynard used to get up very early,

make his daily religious exercises and have a walk in front of the chapel until he should wake up his companions, Father Laity and Brother Reynier. On August 6, 1873, instead of his usual walk, he took a bath in the lake. As he was not seen at the altar at his regular hour, a search was instituted which resulted in his being found with his arms crossed over his breast under six feet of water, but three yards from the shore!

Poor Father Eynard was so kind, so timid, and so exemplary in his whole conduct that everybody felt as if he had sustained a personal loss by his unexpected demise.

More tragical still was the end of a good worker in an humbler field, which saddened the Vicariate-Apostolic of Athabasca-Mackenzie in the summer of 1875. Brother Alexis is no stranger to our readers. Without being naturally skilled, he was the factotum of the northern missions. He boasted no diploma from a polytechnic school, yet was ever ready to act as an engineer, opening up new roads, preparing and directing freight or other expeditions between the different missionary stations. Bishop Faraud was expected at Lac la Biche with a large caravan of new missionaries on his return from the General Chapter of the Oblates. Brother Alexis was then at Lake Athabasca; he was sent by Mgr. Clut with a party of halfbreeds to place himself at the disposal of his bishop. After two weeks' navigation up the Athabasca River, the summer freshets rendered

further progress impossible, and the brother's companions fell back upon a trading post (Fort McMurray) they had passed a few days before. But, prompted by his courage and a sense of duty based on the orders given him, the devoted religious resolved to go on by land with his guide, an Iroquois halfbreed, and an orphan girl he was returning to the sisters of Lac la Biche.

His new route precluded the possibility of carrying a sufficient amount of provisions. Hence he had to count on chance game, which is too often the rarer as it is more needed. The little party had before them a trip of twenty days' duration, but they could take provisions for only four.

A halfbreed is seldom in a hurry to move from a good place. The erstwhile companions of Brother Alexis enjoyed their stay at the fort, and departed only when the water of the river had considerably receded. Great was the consternation of everybody when neither brother nor Iroquois were found at Lac la Biche. Fearing the worst, Father Leduc, in charge of that place since October 16, 1874, immediately dispatched two men on horseback, who returned at the end of twelve days. They had indeed found the good brother, but he was under a layer of sand at the mouth of House River. Of his guide, not a trace; but instead, the most horrible suspicions.

Frantic with grief and bound to ascertain as much as he could of his fate, the superior of Lac la Biche then sent Brother Lambert with some men to bring

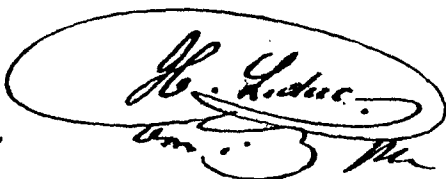
the remains for interment. Surmises then became sad realities. The brother and his companions found nothing but dried up bones evidently deposited by some unknown hand in a shallow hole. Near-by was an axe, still besmeared with blood. The head of the hapless wayfarer was perforated from side to side. No doubt was possible: poor Alexis had fallen a victim to his Iroquois companion.

But, worse still, a few yards therefrom was an old fireplace with the remnants of a gruesome repast: a human vertebra and fragments of a man's ribs! A shoulder-blade was missing; it was afterwards found at a point distant a day's journey from the scene of the crime, a clear evidence that the wretched cannibal had carried along with him portions of his victim's body as one does venison procured in the chase.

Neither Iroquois nor Indian girl was ever seen afterwards. But, with the keen scent of sleuth-hounds which characterizes all halfbreeds, the veil which concealed the guide's doings was soon lifted. From the particularities of the camping places discovered, the footprints in the ground and other minor details, it was ascertained that the Iroquois had appropriated the girl, and that the representations of the brother on such conduct had only accelerated his death. So that, horrible as his end may seem, there is a strong probability that it was withal that of a martyr to chastity.

Brother Alexis Reynard was born September 28,

1828, at Castillon, diocese of Nîmes, France. He made his perpetual vows in the Order of the Oblates on May 9, 1852, and he met his end in the first days of July, 1875.



FATHER LEDUC'S SIGNATURE.

On the following 3rd of September, there arrived at Lac la Biche a new Oblate missionary, Father Auguste Husson, accompanied by two future lay brothers, one of whom, named Thouminet, was to become the victim of a drowning accident at Fort Dunnegan, on Peace River. Two others of his companions were Messrs. Le Serrec and Dupire, a deacon and a subdeacon respectively, who soon after likewise entered the Congregation of the Oblates, and, in common with the head of their caravan, yielded splendid services to the cause of religion and civilization just east of the Rocky Mountains. In this they were only to follow the traditions of their predecessors in the country, as is gathered from this passage from a book by a traveller who passed through it in 1872. The mission referred to is that of St. Bernard's, on Lesser Slave Lake.

"The Roman Catholic missionaries have here a representative, a Mr. Remon [Father Rémas] who,

like his confrères, has sacrificed the advantages of civilized society to devote himself to the conversion of the Indians. This gentleman has built to himself a log shanty, which answers the double purpose of chapel and dwelling-house, and also serves as a school for the few native children at the place. He invited us to tea, and served us up a plentiful repast of third quality pemmican and tea, without the concomitants of sugar and cream. Indeed, from what the old gentleman remarked, I fear his superiors at Lac la Biche were a little remiss in supplying him with the actual necessities of life, as his stock of provisions was exhausted. He told me he had not tasted flour for six months, so I, in return, asked him to our camp, where we treated him to the unusual luxury of fresh bread. He was very communicative, and gave me a letter of introduction to his confrère of Dunvegan, Monsieur Tissier.

“The society which furnishes the North-West Territory of Canada with missionaries of the Roman Catholic persuasion is an extraordinary one, and deserves, *en passant*, a tribute of respect and admiration for the self-sacrificing zeal, self-denial and pluck with which each and every member, from their bishops down to the humblest lay brothers, prosecute the work of Christianization. They are bound by a vow of poverty, and they certainly carry it out to perfection, for they possess nothing but the clothes they actually stand in.”¹

¹“Canada on the Pacific,” by Charles Horetzky, pp. 26, 27. Montreal. 1874.

It is pleasing occasionally to come across Protestant ministers who, not only are not blind to 'the good wrought by rivals in the missionary field, even though they may be of the "Romish" persuasion, but have the courage to give expression to their convictions on that score. The Rev. George M. Grant, a Presbyterian minister of Kingston, in a work entitled "Ocean to Ocean," thus pays his respects to the Catholic institutions and missionaries within the same region:

"We called on Bishop Grandin and found him at home, with six or seven of his clergy who fortunately happened to be in from various missions. The bishop is from old France. The majority of the priests, and all the sisters, are French Canadians.² The bishop and his staff received us with a hearty welcome, showed us around the church, the school, the garden, and introduced us to the sisters. The church represents an extraordinary amount of labour and ingenuity, when it is considered that there is not a saw-mill in the country,³ and that every plank had to be made with a whip or hand-saw. The altar is a beautiful piece of the early Norman style, executed as a labour of love by two of the fathers. The sacristy behind was the original log church and is still used for service in the winter."⁴

²In this Dr. Grant is mistaken. Father Lacombe alone was a French-Canadian.

³Very soon afterwards the machinery of one was added to the little grist-mill already existing at the mission of Lac la Biche.

⁴"Ocean to Ocean," by Rev. G. M. Grant, pp. 189, 190. London, 1877.

Dr. Grant then goes on to relate the origin and growth of St. Albert, mentioning especially the visitation of smallpox which carried off three hundred persons in that place alone. "Men and women fled from their nearest and dearest," he says, but "the priests and the sisters toiled with that devotedness that is a matter of course with them; nursed the sick, shrived the dying, and gathered many of the orphans into their home. The scourge passed away, but the infant settlement had received a severe blow from which it is only beginning to recover. Many are the discouragements, material and moral, of the fathers in their labours."⁸

Of the orphanage proper he says: "They have twenty-four children in it, chiefly girls, two-thirds of the number halfbreeds, the rest Blackfeet or Crees who have been picked up in tents beside their dead parents, abandoned by the tribe when stricken with smallpox."⁹

No less appreciated were Mgr. Taché's own labours. On June 24, 1875, was celebrated at St. Boniface the twenty-fifth anniversary of his episcopal consecration, and the occasion was eagerly seized upon by all the classes of society to shower on the prelate congratulations and presents. Among the latter the most valuable was, no doubt, a fine pipe organ for the cathedral offered by his innumerable friends in the province of Quebec. Mr. Geo. Dugas,

⁸*Ibid.*, *ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 191.

the parish priest of St. Boniface since 1870, had contributed not a little towards procuring the same by his active canvassing for subscriptions in the city of Montreal. Very Rev. Father Antoine, Oblate provincial for eastern Canada, preached on that day a splendid sermon of an historical character.

The Catholic (French) representation in the local parliament had by this time fallen from twelve to ten, and it is safe to assert that the decrease in the number of their constituents was much greater. On the other hand, the Bureau of Education, which controlled the expenditures for school purposes, in conformity with an educational law which gave satisfaction to all parties, except anti-Catholic bigots, then counted only nine Catholic members out of a total of twenty-one. These growing inequalities struck the archbishop as ominous, and he renewed his efforts on behalf of Catholic immigration. His exertions, personal and through the instrumentality of Father Lacombe, were not entirely useless. They soon led to the formation of the parishes of St. Pierre and St. Jean-Baptiste, respectively fifteen and twenty-three miles from Ste. Agathe, though, as a matter of fact, halfbreeds from older centres were the real pioneers of those localities.

It seems as if any considerable arrivals from the east or the United States were bound to occasion corresponding displacements in the ranks of the first occupants of the soil, who yielded their places to the newcomers to seek out the fresh air of the Mani-

toban plains, when they did not emigrate as far north as the valley of the Saskatchewan.

By this time (1875) the parish of St. Mary's, in Winnipeg, had become the most flourishing, if not the most populous of the whole archdiocese, counting about one thousand Catholics out of a population of seven thousand with which the young capital was then credited. So far, practically all the missions being in the hands of the Oblates, no special provision had been made to secure those religious in the possession of any property. With the rapidly changing order of things, it was felt that some equitable repartition of the different posts from a financial standpoint must be made. In consequence, St. Mary's was formally allotted to the Oblate Order, and, under date May 3, 1875, the Superior-General constituted it the chief house of his missionaries in Central Canada, with St. Charles, St. Laurent and St. Florent (or Qu'Appelle) as dependencies.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PROGRESS IN THE SOUTH AND THE NORTHWEST. 1876-1880.

In the course of 1876 the halfbreeds of St. Charles received in the person of Rev. Damase Dandurand the very first Canadian who ever became an Oblate. After years spent in the honourable position of vicar-general of Mgr. Guigues, Bishop of Ottawa, that priest had arrived in Winnipeg, August 28th of the preceding year.

At the same time, St. Laurent, on Lake Manitoba, was under the direction of Father Camper, assisted by Father Saint-Germain, the former having succeeded Father Simonet, who had been in charge since 1870. By dint of persevering efforts, the hearts of the obdurate Santeux, the murderers of Mr. Darveau and their children, had finally been conquered. When Camper first reached St. Laurent, in 1866, the place counted only thirteen Catholic families; ten years later, it boasted thirty-two, with a school under Bro. Mulvihil and fifty pupils. From the mission proper several points were attended by the missionaries along Lakes Manitoba, Winnipegosis and Swan, which occasioned frequent outings and considerable exertions.

As to St. Florent, or Qu'Appelle, it was then un-

der the management of Father Decorby, assisted by Father Hugonard, while Father Gasté directed the fortunes of the lonely post on Lake Caribou, with Father Bonnald and Bro. Guillet as companions. Father Bonnald had arrived there in the summer of 1876, and, endowed with an untiring energy and a zeal that knew no bounds, he immediately set upon learning Cree and awakening heathen and Protestant to a sense of their shortcomings. Outposts were being created around the main centre, chief among which was that of the Sacred Heart, on Lake Pelican, the special field of labour of the new missionary.

Not far from the dreary shores of Lake Caribou extend the famous Barren Grounds of Canada, the most desolate region under the sun, perhaps not even excepting the desert of Sahara. None but aborigines can venture thither, and even they do not make their homes in those frozen and absolutely treeless wastes; but several adjoining tribes, prominent among which is that of the Caribou-Eaters, periodically hunt there in search of reindeer or caribou, and occasionally musk-ox, for which those lonely deserts are famed. So far the Caribou-Eaters had been much more absorbed with the quest after their material food than impressed with a sense of their spiritual requirements. Under the care of Father Moulin, whom we also find at Lake Caribou about this time, an appreciable improvement was noticeable in their conduct. In the beginning of July, 1877, another missionary, Father Paquette, likewise

proffered his services to the priests who battled in that part of Canada against heathenism and Protestantism.

Just in the opposite corner of the Middle West, a new post was being established, which was eventually to develop into the promising city of Calgary. In the fall of 1875 the Federal Government, desirous of safeguarding against the possible hostility of the Blackfeet the lives of the settlers it was directing to the west, had commenced a military post on the Bow River under the leadership of Capt. Brisebois. The barracks were erected on the very spot where Fort La Jonquière had stood, and the establishment was now called Fort Brisebois. In the course of the following year, Col. McLeod changed that name into that of Calgary, after a castle in Mull, belonging to the McLeod family, and said to mean clear water.

The Oblates had likewise started a station some twenty miles therefrom. Realizing the importance which the military post was likely to assume, they transported themselves to its immediate vicinity, forming, through the instrumentality of Father Doucet, the embryo of a new mission, which they put under the patronage of Our Lady of Peace.

This was in 1876. Even at that early date there was some white population clustered near the fort, but it was almost totally Protestant. Soon, however, French halfbreeds commenced to congregate there, not always for the good of their morals. But as late as December 25, 1876, the prospective

mission had as yet neither church nor chapel, the services being held in a private house, though thenceforth the place constantly enjoyed the ministrations of religion.

In the Far North, the chief missionary station was that of Providence. It comprised in 1876, a Bishop's House, the official residence of Mgr. Clut, with Father Lecorre, an Oblate since September 10th of the same year; Father Le Doussal, a secular priest then making his novitiate; Bro. Lecomte, a scholastic awaiting ordination, and the lay brothers Salasse, the great blacksmith and machinist of all the northern missions; Boisramé, the carpenter and engineer of the same, and Renault, the local farmer. With the help of such devoted hands, that post was now as prosperous from a material standpoint as could be expected under such high latitude. The summer of 1875 had witnessed the installation of a little grist-mill for barley; but this was not yet in working order by the end of 1876. Hence the tedious process of hand grinding had still to be resorted to.

By the side of the Bishop's House, and of even more pretentious proportions, was the convent, with an orphanage whose good work was recognized by Protestants and Catholics alike. That very year (1876) Mr. Richard Hardisty, one of the fur-trading magnates of the north and a non-Catholic, donated \$10.00 towards its maintainance.¹ Those charitable institutions were appreciated everywhere, and, not

¹Mr. Hardisty died a Senator.

long before, Mr. W. Christie, another Hudson's Bay Company man and a great friend of the missionaries, had proved even more generous towards the orphanage of Ile à la Crosse. Commencement exercises were held in his honour in English and French, accompanied by songs and recitations in both languages delivered by native urchins who, if not taken up by the good sisters, would have been wallowing in the mire or the slaves of perhaps some selfish relatives. So satisfied was that gentleman with what he saw and heard that he did not leave before presenting the sum of \$25.00 to the institution.

Quite as great was the appreciation elicited from Protestants by the orphanage of St. Albert. It is even on record that a Protestant clergyman contributed towards its support.

Unfortunately spiritual conditions in the posts depending from the Providence mission did not seem so bright. That part of the country was now overrun by the agents of Protestantism, usually schoolmasters stationed at the different posts, third-rate men who were dangerous to the faith of the credulous Indians in proportion to their ignorance of the religious creed they had the mission to discredit and combat by all possible means. Yet their most formidable weapons were the goods put at their disposal to win over the natives to their cause. At Fort Rae and Peel River, the Dog-Ribs and the Loucheux, by dint of hearing attacks on their pastors and ridicule cast on their religious practices,

were becoming indifferent. Great indeed were the exertions of the missionaries; but they did not enjoy the gift of ubiquity. Father Gascon was now wearing out, and the new priests were unfamiliar with the native dialects.

In June of the same year we find Mgr. Clut at Hay River, where he meets Bompas, now an Anglican bishop and a benedict, and practically sees him baptize a child in spite of its mother. "Attending that post are three chiefs, all polygamous, and *therefore* Protestant," avers Father Lecorre, who is himself responsible for the italics.² The same Protestant dignitary then fixed his residence at Athabasca, where Father Ducot watched over the Catholic interests. Bompas had with him a former school-master, a halfbreed promoted to such orders as were in the giving of his Church. He was sent to Peace River, to the great chagrin of the priests who had nobody to oppose him.

At the eastern end of Lake Athabasca, or Fond du Lac, was the mission of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours, frequented by the nomads of the great Barren Grounds and others. Father Pascal was in charge, while Father de Kérangué, a Breton nobleman, had for his share the care of Fort des Liards and its mountaineer Indians.

Coming south, we find in 1876 Bishop Grandin always on the move, and ably seconded in the direction of his diocese by Father Leduc. This was now

²*Missions des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, vol. XVI, p. 374.

entering upon a new phase in its existence: little by little emigration was making itself felt, especially in the valley of the Saskatchewan, where some whites and many halfbreeds were gradually settling. Hence, little groups which were soon to require the ministrations of priests, if the newcomers were not to be left to the tender mercies of the preachers borne on top the wave of emigration, which was as yet but the distant counterpart of that which was now changing the face of Manitoba.

These anti-Catholic ministers were but too ready to challenge the French halfbreeds to a discussion of religious topics, feeling sure of an easy victory because of the generally unlettered character of their adversaries; but they had occasionally to retire from the battlefield with the unavowed persuasion that plain common sense is at times worth at least a smattering of theological knowledge. As the hatred for the Blessed Virgin has ever been a safe criterion of heresy, their attacks had quite often for a theme the veneration rendered her by the Church.

"You pray to Mary as you would to God," said one of them to a halfbreed, "and yet she was nothing but a common woman like those in this fort."

"Is that so?" naively queried his interlocutor. "Then will you please name me one of them who is the mother of God?"

Another day, a minister was inveighing against what he termed the ridiculous practice of penance recommended by the Church, remarking at the same

time that this was perfectly superfluous, since Christ Himself had done penance for us.

"Well," slyly put in an unsophisticated halfbreed, "did not Jesus Christ die for us?"

"Assuredly."

"Then we should not die."

We now have to notice in the front rank of Grandin's missionaries the same Father Lestanc whom the visitation of smallpox at Qu'Appelle, in the first place, and then his knowledge of the Indian languages had gradually drawn to the Northwest, though as late as 1873 we find him momentarily at St. Boniface. The mission established for the benefit of the nomadic Crees of the western plains had necessarily suffered by the withdrawal of Father Lacombe to Winnipeg. Father Lestanc asked himself to be entrusted with it. Accordingly, in the fall of 1877 he founded a station at Fort Pitt, to be used as a basis for apostolic sorties among the Crees. Shortly thereafter, in spite of the fact that a Protestant mission had also been started at the same place, he wrote from among his nomads: "I have already administered over fifty baptisms, of children and adults. My presence on the prairie has a good effect among the Crees, and already I have visited the camps of Kigerwin and of Paskiakwiwin, which seem to live again after a long sleep. I possess nothing, and, thank God, I need nothing."¹⁸

He then had a young priest named Fafard as an

¹⁸*Missions*, vol. XVI., p. 467.

efficient aid in his good work. By order of Bishop Grandin, Lestanc visited also Battleford, then the capital of the Northwest Territories, where he met jovial Père André just arrived, and Governor David Laird, who treated the priests with the utmost courtesy. There he likewise came in contact with a large camp of Crees and four preachers who had not much to do, as the majority of the Indians were Catholics. For the lack of a building large enough to accommodate so many people, he had to daily visit them in their tepees and remind them of their religious obligations.

At Fort Pitt Father Fafard had in the meantime busied himself with the construction of a house, and was now even starting a school. From the inception of the mission to January 11, 1878, the two priests had made sixty-two baptisms, blessed eight marriages, and received two abjurations.

The 13th of September, 1877, was a red-letter day in the annals of the western plains Indians. On that date, accompanied by two hundred militiamen, the Hon. Mr. Laird arrived at Fort McLeod to conclude a treaty whereby the Blackfeet and other allied tribes, with a few Crees, ceded their rights to the land in consideration of periodical rations and a reserve five miles by a hundred and fifty. A Catholic priest was there to help the authorities in their arduous task, but one whose absence elicited genuine regret was Father Lacombe. The devoted missionary was in eastern Canada, working in the

interests of Catholic colonization on the western plains, when he was officially requested (July 19, 1877) by the Secretary of State to attend that important meeting. Pursuant to that invitation, Lacombe had indeed left for the Far West, but illness had detained him at St. Paul.

This brings us to the consideration of the efforts made by the religious authorities on behalf of Catholic immigration to Manitoba. Archbishop Taché had obtained the nomination as agent for that meritorious work of a lawyer named Charles Lalime. In conjunction with Father Lacombe that gentleman secured the arrival, in May, 1876, of one hundred and five settlers from the United States. During that same year, Lacombe procured altogether for the incipient parishes of Manitoba no less than five hundred new colonists, all French Canadians. As an outcome of his success, he was again deputed to the east at the end of January, 1877. He then outdid even himself. From May to the end of July of that year, six hundred more Catholics came, through his exertions, to swell the ranks of their brethren on the plains of the Middle West.

This influx of French Canadians was all the more welcome as many of the Catholic halfbreeds were then migrating north, to the great annoyance of their best friend on earth, Mgr. Taché. It allowed also of the founding of new parishes and of the consolidation of those already existing. By an archiepiscopal decree dated January 5, 1877, the parishes

of St. Jean-Baptiste, St. Joseph and St. Pie had already been canonically erected. Mr. Fillion was named to the first, and shortly afterwards Mgr. Taché gave him an assistant, Rev. Michel Charbonneau, who became the following year the victim of Orange brutality.* Mr. Fillion had at the same time the care of the two other new parishes, which, together with St. Jean-Baptiste and other minor centres, became immediately the homes of the new settlers. Thenceforth Mgr. Taché took it upon himself to visit them regularly.

Another visitation which it behooves us to chronicle is that of Very Rev. Father Soullier, delegated by the General of the Oblates (June-July, 1876), to his confrères in Manitoba, a visitation which was but the forerunner of a more solemn one which that eminent religious was later on to make to the same apostolic field after he had himself been elected to the highest office in his Order.

Archbishop Taché had always expected that his college would ultimately pass into the hands of his own religious family. The visit of Father Soullier having convinced him that the lack of the proper personnel made this an impossibility, Rev. Mr.

*As an outcome of a political election, two men from Morris attempted to invade the home of Rev. Mr. Fillion, where they suspected a man on whom they had to serve a summons had retired. Fillion, who was a powerful man, prevented them from searching his premises, whereupon they returned to Morris, but soon after came back in force. The man they wanted was not there, but they revenged themselves by forcibly removing Mr. Charbonneau, who had absolutely nothing to do with the case, and so ill-treated him that he was afterwards sick for a long period of time.

Forget-Despatis was entrusted with its direction along with other ecclesiastics, and Father Lavoie, O.M.I., who had been at its head for the last eight years, received his obedience for St. Mary's, Winnipeg.

This same college had become, early in 1877, a component part of the University of Manitoba, together with those of St. John and of Manitoba, representing respectively Anglican and Presbyterian interests. The university was, as it should ever be, a confederation of colleges, and the latter only had a right to teach, according to the religious views of the population for which they had been established. The result was an ideal university, recalling the origins of similar institutions in Europe. The persons named by the College of St. Boniface—the oldest of the three—for the first University Council were: His Grace Archbishop Taché, Revs. Lavoie, G. Dugas and Forget-Despatis, with Messrs. J. Dubuc, J. N. A. Provencher and E. W. Jarvis, B.A. Mr. J. Royal became at the same time vice-chancellor of the University.

Another institution which dates its origin from the same time (1877) is the now famous hospital of St. Boniface. So far, the Grey Nuns had nursed the sick in their own convent. On July 29th, the archbishop blessed a modest building, erected exclusively for the care of the sick, on a piece of land just facing the mouth of the Assiniboine.

Shortly thereafter (August 6th), there arrived at

Winnipeg he who was undoubtedly the most illustrious of all the Governors-General of Canada, Lord Dufferin. He visited with evident interest the various institutions of St. Boniface, and the extreme sympathy manifested by his reply to Mgr. Taché's address of welcome was especially noted. His Excellency's visit was the occasion of a little performance which was the death-knell of the old order of things and the ushering in of the new. On September 29, 1877, in presence of Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris, and Hon. Messrs. Girard, Royal, Dubuc and many other notabilities, he drove in, at St. Boniface, the first spike of the rails that were to unite Manitoba to the United States. On October 9th following, the first railway engine seen in that province arrived on the steamer *Selkirk*, and the famous bells of St. Boniface greeted its appearance as they had previously done for the arrival of the first steamboat that came down the Red.

From a political standpoint 1877 closed with a strong ray of hope for the Catholic interests in Manitoba. The Hon. Mr. Joseph Cauchon had just been named Lieut.-Governor of that country (October 2nd), and of four Crown Ministers, two, Messrs. Girard and Larivière, were Catholics, while Mr. Dubuc, the speaker of the Legislative Assembly, was also of the same persuasion. These were indeed halcyon days for Church and State in the Middle West!

The following year, the religious circles of Mani-

toba were enlarged by the arrival of Rev. Alphonse A. Cherrier, accompanied by four seminarists, and Father Gladu, O.M.I., with Bro. Madore, an Oblate scholastic. Cherrier, who was to furnish a long and honourable career in the west, replaced Mr. G. Dugas as pastor of St. Boniface; Father Gladu was named professor in the college along with nine others, under Mr. Forget-Despatis. From this number of teachers we are warranted in surmising that this was now a well-equipped institution. The roll of pupils counted about one hundred and fifty names.



SIGNATURE OF GOVERNOR CAUCHON.

Just then some annoyance was caused the archbishop by an ordinance of the Governor of the Northwest Territories concerning the right of dispensation from the bans of marriage which was practically denied the Catholic bishops, who had always exercised it whenever required by circumstances. Mgr. Taché protested, and, at his invitation, Bishop Grandin joined his voice to that of his metropolitan. Verbal explanations ensued, which were given to Father Lestanc, then stationed at Battleford, with a view to having them transmitted to his Ordinary. These made it clear that the obnoxious Act had been adopted in good faith.

The government of the Territories was certainly

not hostile to the Catholic Church, as was proved by the fact that, in 1877, it had granted \$300 towards the support of the bi-lingual school of St. Albert. Near Fort Carlton, a centre of French halfbreeds known to the religious authorities as St. Laurent, was now given the official name of Grandin. The best of relations then existed between people of all denominations on the plains of the Saskatchewan. Thus hail having destroyed the crops of the St. Albert settlers, a meeting took place which elected a committee of seven, of whom only one was a Catholic, namely, Bishop Grandin. Among the six Protestants there was an Anglican bishop and three ministers. The Protestant prelate spoke highly of the charitable institutions under Mgr. Grandin. The provisions of the latter's orphanage had dwindled down to twenty or thirty pounds of barley flour: thanks to the intervention of that committee, 4,000 pounds were granted it by the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The same officials were then keeping on their work of settling matters with the original inhabitants of the country. Thus they concluded another treaty with a band of Indians who congregated for the occasion at a place called Sounding Lake. The solemn transaction occurred, August 5, 1878, in presence of Fathers André and Fafard. The following Sunday, mass was celebrated before an immense concourse of people, among whom was Gov. Laird, who seemed agreeably surprised at what he

saw. A Protestant clergyman who happened to be there had also his service: just one Indian was with his congregation.

Whether attracted by the generosity of the Canadian Government or repelled by the duplicity of the American authorities, not less than ten thousand Sioux then migrated from the United States to the diocese of St. Albert. They were hospitably received. Fathers André and Fourmond, then (1879) of St. Laurent, near Carlton, attempted to do something for their souls, with what results may be surmised from the fact that neither of them understood the dialect of the newcomers. Nevertheless, by means of signs, the exhibition of religious emblems and the mimicking of Catholic practices, quite a few were made to understand that in their new country some there were who, in course of time, could continue the good work commenced by priests on American soil.

But even had Grandin's missionaries chosen to ignore the Sioux, they would have been far from idle. In a letter to his Superior-General Father Leduc thus sums up their achievements and situation by June, 1878: "Nine new establishments⁵ have been started within the last two years; more numerous conversions of heathens; a consoling number of abjurations; a Government definitively installed among us; more easy communications; many half-

⁵Lac Lanonne, St. Laurent of Grandin, Prince Albert, Battleford, Duck Lake, Forts Pitt and McLeod, Our Lady of Peace, and St. Joseph of Cumberland.

breeds abandoning their nomadic life and settling down on land; an already large number of Indians fixed on reserves given them by the Government and asking for a Catholic priest. Five of your children travelling the whole summer over the immense deserts of the west to carry the Glad Tidings to the Indians scattered over them: Crees, Blackfeet, Blood Indians, Piegans, Sarcees, Assiniboines, Sauteux. . . . In the vast district of Cumberland, hitherto necessarily neglected, Fathers Bonnard and Paquette see their efforts crowned with success.”

To help consolidate and extend the good work, two Oblate fathers, Hert and Mérier, arrived in the fall of 1878, who were immediately attached to that diocese. Unfortunately, by the most regrettable of accidents, the former, a young priest burning with zeal and of a consuming activity, was but too soon to fall a victim to his very intrepidity: he was found dead of fatigue and exposure by the shore of a lake on October 15, 1880.

A very different end was that of an older worker in the Lord's vineyard. After many years passed in the direction of the Ile à la Crosse Mission, Father Prosper Légeard, a fervent religious, a great apostle of the Sacred Heart and an able missionary, though his health did not permit of much travelling, went to his reward peacefully, assisted by his brothers in religion, on June 1, 1879, that is, on the very

Missions des O. M. I., vol. XVI., p. 458.

threshold of the month consecrated to that Divine Heart he had so well served.

But, as Bishop Provencher repeatedly remarked, a religious Order may lose subjects by death or otherwise: it is itself, if not proof against extinction, at least in a position to guarantee a continuity in the prosecution of the tasks it has undertaken. Hence, on August 16, 1879, do we see Bishop Grandin returning from the General Chapter of the Oblates with two promising young priests, Fathers Lecocq and Rapet.

Légeard's eminent virtues were greatly appreciated by his Ordinary; but the humble religious had not the consolation of seeing the latter at his death-bed. Mgr. Grandin's own health had long been impaired, and he had been obliged to pass almost two years in Europe, preaching and collecting funds and goods for his distant missions, to which he could not return before November 20, 1879. So elated were his people at seeing him back at St. Albert that they gave him a grand reception: carriages with an escort of mounted halfbreeds, noisy volleys of musketry, and the thunder of cannon.

Meantime the period of transition they were traversing was telling on the proud children of the plains under him. Unaccustomed to manual labour, they were loath to resort to agriculture for a living; and yet the disappearance of the buffalo, now yearly more evident, was gradually forcing on them a mode of life for which they felt the greatest repugnance.

The stately Blackfeet, whose tribe still numbered some 6,000 souls, had been reduced to the necessity of killing and eating all their dogs, after which they had stooped to gophers and even mice, or the carcasses of dead animals, when they did not live on roots and old skins. The Government sent them rations; but what were these among so many!

"What a change since last fall!" exclaims Father Doucet (February 24, 1880). "I could scarcely recognize in these thin and emaciated victims of starvation, the splendid savages, veritable giants, I had seen before. They were men no more, but walking skeletons. The children and the old people especially have succumbed to the scourge. Mothers could no longer nurse the poor little things that died in their arms."

Fortunately, if many departed this world prematurely, their death was but a passing into eternal life, as famine is usually the best possible missionary to the Indians. Hence an increase of labour for the priests, of which they were far from complaining.

In the Far North famine is so common that we have scarcely noticed it even when it carried off Indians by the dozen. Just then, however, conditions were not so desperate. The new missionaries, desirous of replacing the wretched huts of their predecessors by decent houses, were in several places showing their proficiency in carpentry. Thus at St. Michael's Father Roure, aided by Bro. Bois-

Missions des O. M. I., vol. XVIII, pp. 155, 156.

ramé, was erecting (1879) a mission building which agreeably contrasted with the dilapidated abode he had found on his arrival at that place. As we have seen, the material side of Providence was on a satisfactory basis; but, with thirty orphans to feed and exceedingly limited pecuniary resources, manual labour could not be dispensed with, even by the priests and the bishop himself, when at home.

At Lake Athabasca, the heads of the two missions reported spiritual consolations which compensated them for their great privations. Writing of his nomadic flock, Father Pascal had the following under date December 10, 1879: "Several among them faithfully recite twice the beads every Sunday, as well as on Fridays and days of fast and abstinence. When away from the priest and buried in the solitude of the woods, they gather up all their religious pictures, with which they decorate a tepee, which for the nonce is transformed into a chapel. There they assemble to pray, and sing hymns in their language."⁸

⁸*Missions*, vol. XVIII, p. 137.

CHAPTER XXIX.

EPISCOPAL VISITATIONS AND PROTESTANT APPRECIATIONS.

1880-1881.

Etymologically, a missionary is "one who is sent," a messenger, and therefore a great traveller. We already know enough of the doings of those heralds of the Cross in northwestern Canada to need no further proof that they lived fully up to the meaning of their name. Unless absolutely debarred therefrom by infirmities, superiors of missions as well as simple missionaries passed most of their days, and some of their nights, on the wing, as there was scarcely any who had only one post under his care. Three or four, sometimes half a dozen or more, outposts had generally to be visited in rotation, while the bishops were, by virtue of their pastoral charge, bound to periodically inspect each of the missions, and occasionally even some of their dependencies. In 1880-81, Bishop Grandin made such a visitation of his immense diocese, in which the reader may accompany him if he wishes to survey in its entirety the good work then accomplished by his priests.

On April 12, 1880, in spite of a biting cold, he left St. Albert, accompanied by Father Végreville, arriving on the morrow at Our Lady of Lourdes, an out-

post newly founded on the left bank of the Saskatchewan, where a few French Canadians had settled. This little mission was attended by Father Mérier, of St. Albert, who directed at the same time the theological studies of two aspirants to the priesthood. The establishment was among the humblest: a wooden chapel 34 by 20, as yet unfinished, and a dwelling-house 24 by 20. After a pontifical high mass, confessions and confirmations—the order of the day followed at all the stopping places of the little party—the bishop leaves, April 19th, for St. François-Régis, or Fort Pitt, which he reaches on May 1st, after a trip made partly in a primitive vehicle, partly on foot, and after having been repeatedly delayed on the way by the crossing of about forty-five unbridged streams of all sizes, usually on the ice, but sometimes also through the water swollen by the spring freshets. We shall omit the numerous accidents: broken wheels or shafts, animals stuck fast in the mire or almost drowned in the rivers, and the like, which are the unavoidable accompaniment of such travelling. We must be content with a few words on the missions themselves which we meet in our path.

That of St. François-Régis is in charge of Fathers Fafard and Bourgine; but Father Petitot, the learned missionary of the north, whose state of health has demanded his removal from the snows of the Mackenzie, has arrived there to greet his new Ordinary. From a material standpoint this post is still less

advanced than that of Our Lady of Lourdes; but though it has existed barely two years, its registers attest already the administration of 287 baptisms, of which a quarter is of adults, and the celebration of twenty-five marriages. Five outposts depend from Fort Pitt, or St. François-Régis; namely, Long Lake, Frog Lake, Onion Lake, Rock Lake and Saddle Lake. These are frequented by Crees who formerly lived on buffalo, but have now to resort to fishing and public charity when the Government rations fail them. In each of them the Government keeps an agent whose province it is to teach them the principles of agriculture.

In this connection, even humble and charitable Grandin cannot refrain from remarking: "Without being a prophet, I think I am in a position to predict that the results will be far from commensurate with the expenses. The missionaries would succeed incomparably better if they had the same means, and it is to them that the agents of the Government owe the few successes they have achieved."¹

The same authority adverts in these terms to another class of newcomers among those aborigines: "The different posts which I have just enumerated receive also the visit of Protestant clergymen of various sects. The apostles of error recruit themselves more easily than those of truth. Their superiors are less exacting, and subject them to fewer preparatory trials. They usually come to this coun-

¹*Missions des O. M. I.*, vol. XIX., p. 197.

try as schoolmasters; then one fine morning we learn that they have become *Reverend* and act as such. One meets at times halfbreeds and Indians who but yesterday barely knew how to read the Bible and to translate it incorrectly into a native dialect, promptly raised to the rank of ministers. Their compatriots regard them as savants because they read big books; but civilized folks, who daily arrive in larger numbers, are ashamed of their *Reverends*, and do not conceal their sentiments in this respect.”

But the way is long: better arrive immediately (May 14th) with the bishop and Father Petitot at St. Raphael's, where the latter, with an energy which does not seem the worse for past privations and prolonged explorations, is endeavouring to put up the buildings of the new station. “This father is the man of action by excellence,” writes Grandin. “Nothing can stop him; nothing frightens him. Along with a servant³, he has cut down and hewn the lumber necessary for a large building. It is impossible to imagine the amount of work they have accomplished in three months. To fell spruces, say mass under a tent when the weather was not too severe, and go from time to time to visit his brethren of Fort Pitt and the Christians of Cold Lake was for this good father a distraction rather than labour.”⁴

³*Ibid.*, *ibid.*, p. 193.

⁴Who deserted him for several months because the work he had to perform was beyond his powers of endurance.

⁵*Missions*, vol. XIX., pp. 199, 200.

The Indians of this new post are Chippewayans originating at Ile à la Crosse and Cold Lake. On Pentecost Sunday a solemn service, preceded by confessions and followed by confirmations, gladdened the heart of those good Christians.

On the 22nd the bishop gave an agreeable surprise to Father Chapelière, the pastor of Green Lake and one of the numerous recruits he had himself brought from France.* The natives settled there likewise hailed from Ile à la Crosse. Hence the prelate's partiality for them.

After a three days' stay, Mgr. Grandin left in a barge for Ile à la Crosse, which he had not seen for five years. Fathers Legoff, Chapelière and Rapet greeted him at the mission which he had so many reasons to remember. There he soon had clear evidence of consoling progress. The church was now much too small, in spite of the recent addition of a vestry and of a gallery. It is a source of satisfaction to remark that the increase in the population which those conditions bespoke was entirely due to an excess of births over deaths, not the result of outside accessions. Some 750 or 800 Chippewayans, now

*Father G  rasime Chapeli  re, a Frenchman hailing from the diocese of Laval, though he was born in that of Rouen, was to die two years later (11th July, 1882), a victim to his charity. His canoe having capsized, he easily saved himself by swimming ashore. But quite a number of Indians had been with him. As some of them could not extricate themselves from the water, he immediately went back for them, placed one of the children on his back, and, seizing another by the hair, he made for the land. But his double burden was too much for him. He succumbed to the awkwardness of his position, which rendered swimming impossible, sinking with the two children, whose frantic efforts to clutch his limbs resulted in his death.

perfectly civilized and as industrious as possible under the circumstances, attended that mission.


"All the Indians are Christians, and it can be said that their conduct is becoming daily more consistent with their faith. True civilization pervades their mode of life, and, were the land more favourable to agriculture, they would undoubtedly become a people entirely transformed from a material as well as a spiritual standpoint. The edge of the lake, in the arable portion, is dotted with houses surrounded by little fields; villages are then formed at regular intervals, to the distance of ten, twenty, thirty, and even more, leagues. In the spring and autumn, the missionary visits the villages, and this is a source of many journeyings."

And to say that these Indians were originally nomads, glorying in their idleness and revelling in the coarsest vices!

On the occasion of the bishop's visitation, the exercises of a retreat were given, Mgr. Grandin preaching in French, Fathers Legoff and Rapet in Chippewayan, and Father Chapelière in Cree. The 6th of June was a Sunday; it was made the occasion of a solemn procession of the Blessed Sacrament. The visiting prelate received also the abjuration of a Protestant halfbreed, whom he afterwards regenerated in the waters of baptism.

June 15th Grandin was at Methy Portage, a

¹Bishop Grandin, in *Missions des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, vol. XIX., p. 260.



minor station visited twice a year by Father Legoff. Exactly one month later, he arrived at Ste. Gertrude's Mission, Lake Pelican, whither he had gone by canoe in the midst of drenching rains and in the face of an almost incessant headwind. There he found Father Bonnald struggling with Protestantism, represented by the local schoolmaster. The priest had but the poorest dwelling quarters; but the quality of his Christians made up for the destitution of his residence. At the time of the preceding episcopal visitation, five years before, the same bishop had found there only a wooden cross and a score of Catholics; the latter are now two hundred, as a rule most attentive to their religious duties.

Fort Cumberland was the headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company traders for the entire district. It had long been the bulwark of Protestantism in the country. But better days had come for Catholicism with the advent of Father Bonnald and the nomination as commander of the fort of a French Canadian of good family, Mr. Horace Bélanger, who was as excellent a Christian as he was an undoubted gentleman. This made the bishop's sojourn in the place especially pleasant, in spite of the presence of an Anglican archdeacon, who was himself on an official visitation to his co-religionists. That clergyman must have felt some surprise at the enthusiasm with which the "Roman" prelate was received in a locality but lately Protestant to the core. The bishop was taken in procession from

the fort to the mission, walking under a canopy carried by Mr. Bélanger and some elders. There he received the formal visit of the Governor of the Northwest Territories, who happened to be present.

With undisguised regret did the itinerant prelate forbear the pleasure of pushing on as far as Lake Caribou, and visiting Father Gasté in his distant retreat; such a voyage would have prevented him from returning that year to St. Albert, and his health did not allow of a winter journey. He therefore left Fathers Paquette and Lecocq in their mission of Fort Cumberland, taking, August 12th, the steamer for Prince Albert, which he reached on the 18th of the same month.

Prince Albert was then "almost a little English town," which the traveller thought would soon eclipse St. Albert! It had originally been a Hudson's Bay Company fort, round which a few settlers had gathered at a comparatively early date, for whom a Presbyterian church had also been built. In the course of 1879 Father Leduc purchased a lot on which a church and a priest's house were put up. Prince Albert was now the home of jolly Père André, who had in charge the few Catholics of the place and some dependencies, while Father Fourmond was stationed at St. Laurent of Grandin, which was reached soon after. There sixty persons were confirmed.

August 27th saw the bishop at Battleford, the capital of the Northwest, which did not seem to

have much faith in its own future, since the state of the place was truly pitiful to behold. The Catholic establishment was in keeping with its environments, the services being held in an apology for a church 20 by 25, covered with a thatched roof. Yet the town, such as it was, harboured the office of a newspaper, "The Saskatchewan Herald," a mere shack like all the habitations unconnected with the Government.

Such were then the headquarters of Father Lestanc. With him Bishop Grandin found Fathers Leduc, Hert and Bourguine, with Bro. Bowes, who had come to meet him from the west. After visiting several outposts, the prelate entered his beloved St. Albert, September 22nd, after an absence of five months.

In the spring of 1881, this episcopal tour was resumed on behalf of the southern missions of his diocese. Leaving St. Albert, April 27th, the bishop made the canonical visitation of St. Joachim's, or Edmonton, whence he proceeded to Our Lady of Peace (Calgary). On his way he installed, some forty-five miles from Edmonton, his only secular priest, the pioneer of that branch of the clergy in his diocese. This was Rev. Mr. Bellevaire, a native of the diocese of Nantes, France, who was to establish a new mission for the benefit of the Crees.

It was on April 30, 1881, that the incumbent of what was soon to be called Calgary, Father Doucet, received his Ordinary in his rather primitive quar-

ters. There, in addition to holding the usual confirmation service, the latter blessed a bell on Pentecost Sunday, June 5, 1881. Five days later he bade farewell to the Bow River, and on the 12th he was at Blackfoot Crossing, where he met some twelve hundred Blackfeet, and, three miles higher up, a camp of five hundred Sarcees.

His arrival was the occasion of many addresses from the natives, who harangued him to satiety with a view to obtaining resident priests. At the same time they inveighed against the Government and its agents among them. To the request that concerned him personally, the bishop kindly acceded, and immediate steps were taken to put his new plans into execution.

June 22nd, accompanied by Father Doucet, he was in sight of Fort McLeod, which struck him rather unfavourably as a "kind of a town which was dying before it had lived." "We have nothing there," adds the bishop, "but there are quite a number of Irish Catholics, and with them one always fares well. They took care of us during our stay, and on our departure they found the means of making us generous alms."

On June 24th the camp of the Piegans, on Old Man's River, was visited, and the same request for priests heard. Mgr. Grandin was all the more inclined to meet the wishes of the natives as "since they have accepted the treaty and there are soldiers

to protect the whites, ministers of all denominations abound. Far from posing as antagonists, they pretend to teach the same religion as we do," he adds, "and to come here only to be our auxiliaries and make up for the insufficiency of our numbers."¹⁸

There, as everywhere among the Plains Indians, polygamy was the principal obstacle to conversion. Nevertheless, Grandin put it on record that, by dint of perseverance and self-denial, over a thousand Blackfeet had been converted to the true faith and its morality. For these he now formally erected the mission of St. Léon.

While the Bishop of St. Albert was engaged in these peregrinations, his brother bishop of the Far North, Mgr. Clut, was returning from France to his distant missions. It took him seventy-five days to cover with carts the distance which separates St. Boniface from Lac la Biche, and he was not at the Nativity, on Lake Athabasca, before August 14, 1880. On November 8th of the following year, we still find him there with Father Pascal.

He then sent Father Laity to St. Henri's Mission (Fort Vermillion, on Peace River), a station which had been put on its present footing of permanency by Father Husson. September 24, 1881, we see the bishop arrive himself at St. Charles of Dunvegan, on the same stream, where Father Le Doussal receives him as best he can. What that "best" was, we can judge from the fact that his guest had to

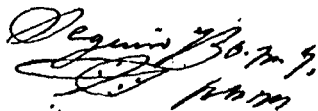
¹⁸*Ibid.*, *ibid.*, p. 317.

decamp as soon as possible owing to the straits through which the missionary was just passing: nothing to eat but a few potatoes! Against hunger no reasoning could stand.

Therefore the bishop repaired to Lesser Slave Lake, as it was too late in the season to return to the Nativity. There Fathers Dupin and Le Serrec greeted him October 27th. In spite of their extreme poverty, the priests had adopted an old man, because none of his people would have him. Very soon they realized that by taking him over they had burdened themselves with his entire family. They had not the heart to turn them out, but preferred to lose the use of their kitchen, which those people had appropriated. Mgr. Clut could not see them so cramped for room, and had that part of their premises returned to its owners.

It was everywhere the same generosity and spirit of sacrifice. At the time we have reached in our narrative, the echo of the sad events which had resulted in the dispersion of the French religious communities had reached the wastes of the north, and it was apprehended that the missions would have to suffer thereby. But the missionaries were ready for any eventuality. "You seem quite affected by the melancholy happenings in France," the veteran Father Séguin wrote from Good Hope to Mgr. Clut. "Allow me to buoy up your spirits. Though we should have to suffer even greater privations, what matters it? If we compare our present

situation with that of former years, we will esteem ourselves happy as we are. I do hope that, with God's grace, we will be able to stand misery as we did in times past."



FATHER SEGUIN'S SIGNATURE.

If we now leave the dreary forests and deserts of the north and the vast plains of the Saskatchewan for the equally immense, but less lonely, prairies of Manitoba, we shall find the latter transformed into a theatre of unusual activity by both religious and secular rulers. At the head of the Catholic workers is Taché, whose noble figure looms up greater than that of any other personality, of whatever rank or creed, in the whole Canadian West. A French nobleman, who was a Huguenot, had shortly before visited Manitoba. In spite of the narrow prejudices common to most of his co-religionists in the old world, he could not refrain from testifying to the prelate's unbounded influence and sterling worth in a book published in 1880. From it we clip the following:

"The Roman Catholic Archbishop of St. Boniface, Mgr. Taché, a brother to the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Immigration at Ottawa, was then absent from Red River. I had seen him at Montreal and Ottawa, where he had gone to regain his health



MOST REV. A. TACHÉ, O.M.I.

First Archbishop of St. Boniface

shattered by twenty and more years of missions in the country of the Northwest. In my opinion—and this I say unmoved by any religious preoccupations—this prelate, whose influence extends over the whole French Canadian and halfbreed population, as well as a good portion of the Indians of his immense diocese, is one of those really superior men whose acquaintance leaves an impression as deep as it is lasting. . . . What he has conceived, attempted and achieved for the moral and material improvement of the country at the time when the Hudson's Bay Company ruled; the energy he has spent during the troubles occasioned by the annexation, to maintain on legal grounds a resistance which insane provocations might at any moment have converted into open strife; all this would require, in order to be properly set forth, more space than is allowed by the scope of this book.

“Few know so thoroughly the immense network of forests and prairies which form his immense diocese and those of his two suffragans,* the Bishop of St. Albert on the Saskatchewan and the Vicar-Apostolic of the Mackenzie River. The little book, simple though it seems, which he published in 1868 with the modest title *Esquisse sur le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique*, is certainly the most complete and accurate collection of hydrographical, ethnological, botanical and zoological information on this vast region which has ever appeared in our language, and I doubt

*East of the Rocky Mountains.

whether there is one which is really superior among the whole range of English works on the subject. Let us add that Mgr. Taché has for collaborators in his ministry men remarkable by their zeal and learning.

"Such are, among others, Mgr. Grandin, a French Oblate, to-day Bishop of St. Albert; Father La-combe, the author of conscientious works on the idioms of various tribes; Mgr. Faraud, Vicar-Apostolic of the Mackenzie; Father Petitot, of the same vicariate, one of the last laureates of the Geographical Society of Paris."¹⁰

To these Mr. de Lamothe might have added Father Legoff, who was also to publish linguistic works, and whose worth as a missionary is thus appreciated by a Protestant in the Toronto "Saturday Night":

"Whatever the bickerings of party politicians, whatever the aims of self-seeking and ambitious men, however strong religious antipathies in Eastern Canada may be, the writer (a Protestant) wishes to bear this testimony to the devotedness, earnestness and simplicity of the Roman Catholic missionaries in the far north portion of the Northwest. Where can be found a simpler, more gentle, earnest old man than Bishop Grandin, whose diocese extends over the territory north of the Saskatchewan? A more lovable old man the writer never met. To show what the Catholic missionaries will do, the case of Father Legoff may be mentioned. When the writer first met him he mistook him for an Indian.

¹⁰*Cinq Mois chez les Français d'Amérique*, pp. 266, 267. Paris, 1879.

Father Legoff was born in Quebec¹¹ and is of good birth, being descended from a long line of aristocratic nobles of Old France. Between thirty and forty years ago he volunteered for missionary work in the Northwest, and when the writer met him he had been for twenty-seven years a missionary to a little band of Wood Crees and Chippewayans at their settlement, 260 miles northeast from Edmonton and civilization. He was as tanned as an Indian, his clothes were ragged and torn; he looked ill and weary, but to hear him talk, as he sat at supper in the writer's tent, in the finest French (he cannot speak a word of English), to see his eye kindle and light up with enthusiasm as he spoke of the gratitude of the poor uncultured Indians under his charge, to gradually come to ascertain his gentleness of character, his childlike religious simplicity, to understand the hardships he had passed through—often in winter on the verge of starvation—to gradually take in all that he had given up, all that he had voluntarily assumed, was to love the shabby-looking priest, and to wish the world contained more such noble men and noble Christians.

"For months at a time this devoted priest never saw a newspaper or received a letter. For months at a time he never had a chance to talk in his native language. His diet was that of the Indians, coarse, plain, ill-cooked; he would work with the Indians on their little patches of clearances; he baptized, mar-

¹¹A mistake. Father Legoff (or Le Goff) was a native of Brittany, France.

ried, buried them, and when his own time comes will be buried by them. And the case of this spare-looking, devoted, noble priest is but one of the many. Self-denial, self-abnegation is their characteristic. Father Damiens can be found, even in the solitude and vastness of the far north of the far Northwest."¹²

The impression left on an old missionary by a perusal of the foregoing warm encomium is that he who wrote it must have had but a very limited acquaintance with the hardships of the Catholic missionaries, else he would not have waxed so enthusiastic over traits of their life which are common to all, and neglected particularities which are almost past belief.

To crown these lengthy quotations by one (likewise from a Protestant) which is intended for all the Catholic missionaries in Western Canada, here is what we read in a work by the great botanist, Prof. John Macoun, of Ottawa:

"Throughout the whole Northwest there have been no men of any Church superior in any sense to the fathers with whom the writer has met in his numerous journeys both east and west of the Rocky Mountains. He looks upon their labours as having produced due respect for the marriage relationship, a proper regard for the Sabbath, and an earnest for peaceable and upright dealings one with another, in every part of the country he has visited."¹³

¹²*Ubi supra*. That appreciation is reproduced in Hill's *History of Manitoba*, pp. 549-51.

¹³"Manitoba and the Great North-West," p. 115. Guelph, 1882.

CHAPTER XXX.

FURTHER PROGRESS, SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL.

1880-1884.

It is such a satisfaction to see true merit recognized by those who might be expected to ignore it that we have somewhat tarried on the appreciatory remarks of Protestant authors. We have now to return to St. Boniface, which we unavoidably neglected in our last chapter. There we will find the archbishop, ever alive to the paramount importance of education, laying, May 2, 1880, the first stone of a new college building to replace the old one, now entirely too small. The new edifice was ready for occupancy by September of the following year; but the director of the institution could not enjoy the advantages of the improvements: Mr. Despatis died June 9, 1881, regretted by all for his qualities of mind and heart. Rev. Mr. Cherrier succeeded him.

On the west side of the Red another important building was rising above ground. It was St. Mary's church, the first edifice consecrated exclusively to Catholic worship in Winnipeg. Mgr. Taché blessed its corner-stone August 15, 1880, and, slightly over a year later (September 4, 1881), it was solemnly dedicated to God under the patronage of His blessed Mother by the same prelate, assisted by Archbishop

Lynch, of Toronto, who preached the sermon. Thus was inaugurated the brick church now standing on St. Mary's Avenue.

As an almost indispensable supplement thereto, three Brothers of Mary arrived from Dayton, Ohio, August 25, 1880, to take charge of the school for boys whom Father McCarthy had been directing since 1878.¹

His superior, Father Lacombe, was at the same time leaving St. Mary's for a mission as novel to him as it was meritorious. The Canadian Pacific Railway was then being built, and already Fathers Allard, Baudin and Marcoux, O.M.I., had spent some time looking after the spiritual interests of the Catholics who formed perhaps one-half of the force engaged in its construction. Father Lacombe followed in the wake of these good priests, and passed sixteen months ministering to the workmen under the most untoward circumstances.

By this time the proportion of the Catholics settled in Manitoba had diminished to such an extent that the French element, which alone was represented by separate constituencies because of its more compact grouping, could claim but five, or at most six, seats in a house of twenty-four members. This urged the archbishop to renewed exertions. By correspondence and through Rev. Mr. Doucet and the lawyer Lalime, he encouraged the current of

¹St. Mary's School under the new management was opened 1st Sept., 1880, with Brothers Bertrand, William and Joseph as teachers.

emigration from Eastern Canada and the New England States.

The newcomers were not always as numerous as the great Churchman and patriot might have wished, though, in April, 1878, Mr. Lalime had brought in as many as 423 colonists. But some of them were real acquisitions, of whom any country or denomination might have been proud. Such were, for instance, Mr. Thomas A. Bernier, a man who never hesitated to come forward whenever the interests of the Church or of education were at stake. He reached Manitoba, April 17, 1880. On the 28th of the following May came Mr. L. A. Prud'homme, an able writer, learned judge and thorough Christian, who has won high esteem by his accomplishments.

As early as August, 1877, four settlers had established themselves in the Pembina mountains. These pioneers were yearly followed by others, until in 1879 fifty families were to be found there who, on the 22nd of April, were organized as a parish under the vocable of St. Léon. On September 8th of the same year Rev. Mr. Theobald Bitshe became its first resident priest, and the locality soon entered upon a period of great prosperity. The following year (1880) another group, which had been organizing ever since 1878, St. Pierre, received its first incumbent in the person of Mr. J. M. A. Jolys, a native of Brittany. A church 40 by 32 was blessed in the new parish, which, four years later, had to be replaced by one 85 feet long and 45 in width.

Both of these parishes were French. But, together with Ontario Orangemen and Slavs and Britishers from the Old World, the tide of immigration was bringing not a few Irish and other English-speaking Catholics, who, naturally enough, were settling among people of their own tongue. Thus it came to pass that the parish of St. Mary's had to be divided, as the Catholics in the vicinity of Point Douglas, where the first missionaries had landed in 1818, could not, owing to the distance and other reasons, conveniently frequent the church on St. Mary's Avenue. Hence in the course of 1882 Mgr. Taché had himself a new church built for that portion of his flock, which he blessed December 8th of the same year. March 4, 1883, he entrusted it to the care of Father Lebreton, O.M.I.

Such was the origin of the parish of the Immaculate Conception in Winnipeg. Its first school opened at the same time as it received its first resident pastor.

That same year, 1883, saw the beginning (August 3rd) of the boarding school for young ladies of St. Boniface, for which a building 100 by 50 had been constructed. Taché had no uncertain views concerning education. To him the school was but the adjunct of the church and the complement of the Christian home. He could not conceive of any divorce between religion and instruction. In this he was but following all the really great minds of the age.

Among the best recruits of the time we must mention Rev. Mr. Joseph A. Messier, whose first sphere of action was the college. That ecclesiastic was as yet in minor orders; on May 19, 1883, he was admitted to the priesthood, and two years later he became secretary to the archbishop and assistant priest of the cathedral parish. In February, 1882, another cleric, Rev. Jos. Campeau, likewise commenced his career at St. Boniface College. He was ordained priest in the course of 1884, and the following year he became practically the founder of St. Alphonse, a new parish which had received corporate existence in 1883, by being detached from the territory of St. Léon.

These ecclesiastical newcomers, coinciding with increasing religious needs, greatly consoled the venerable prelate. They made him look more complacently on the passage at St. Boniface of such men as Father Legal and others, whom he saw there in May, 1881, on their way to a more western field. Yet they made such an impression on him that he could not help confiding it to his friend of St. Albert.² It is, however, more than doubtful if the metropolitan of the St. Boniface province ever realized that, in the passing Oblate we have named, he saw the future successor of his western suffragan.

It can scarcely be gainsaid that, in his capacity of religious superior of the Oblates under his episcopal jurisdiction, Taché was at times tempted to believe

²To Mgr. Grandin, May 28th, 1881.

he was somewhat neglected by the Paris authorities in the distribution of subjects for the various posts in the keeping of his Order. In answer to mild remonstrances on that point, Father Ouellette was sent him in the spring of 1883. The new priest was afterwards to become the parish priest of St. Mary's, which Father Lavoie was governing since October 1st of the preceding year.

The archbishop could not but be pleased with his new subject. Yet, as vicar of missions he was scarcely satisfied with one. He cast longing eyes in the direction of Eastern Canada, where laboured another who, he had been told, "spoke English well, and had the necessary talents to worthily represent the Congregation at St. Mary's." This suggestion, which was almost a request, referred to Father Adélard Langevin. It was made in November, 1884, but was not to be heeded for many years to come. When finally acted on, a dignity far transcending the pastorate of St. Mary's was in store for the object of Taché's choice.

Father Lebret's presence being needed at Qu'Appelle, he received his obedience for that post in the summer of 1884, resigning the care of his parish of the Immaculate Conception into the hands of Mr. Cherrier (July 14th), who has ever since remained in charge of the same. Rev. Mr. Azarie Dugas, a new arrival, took his place at the head of the college.

*To Rt. Rev. Father Fabre, Superior-General of the Oblates; St. Boniface, 17th Nov., 1884.

The time seemed now arrived to replace in the most prosperous localities the wooden and temporary church buildings by edifices of more lasting material. After St. Mary's church and St. Boniface college, we have now the church of St. Norbert, which Mr. Ritchot rebuilt in brick (1883). Better churches were also provided in 1884 for St. Jean-Baptiste, St. Pierre and Qu'Appelle Station.

It was likewise an epoch fecund in religious foundations. In the first place, we have to record the establishment, early in May, 1883, of a convent school at Ste. Anne des Chênes. Then, in September of the same year, five nuns (Faithful Companions of Jesus) arrived from France at Brandon, destined to teach the young of their own sex. We have already seen that in 1883 a school was started in connection with the parish of the Immaculate Conception, under the direction of the Sisters of the Holy Names. Its first roll contained seventy-five pupils.

A still more important foundation, at least as far as the aborigines of Manitoba were concerned, was negotiated that same year at Ottawa and decided on in principle, though as a matter of fact the ill-will of the then Lieutenant-Governor of the Northwest succeeded, for the time being, in causing a postponement of its realization. We refer to the Industrial School of Qu'Appelle, which was soon to become the prototype of all such institutions. Pending the establishment of that school, Archbishop Taché

founded four others for the benefit of the original inhabitants of his diocese.

But this solicitude for the welfare of his dusky children could not make him forget the whites and halfbreeds. In the spring of 1884, a new parish with a resident priest was started at La Broquerie, with a Mr. Guay as first incumbent. Some time later, August 3, 1884, there was blessed at Regina, a mere speck on the prairie just chosen for the capital of the Northwest, a small but beautiful edifice which became Rev. Mr. Larché's church.

The times of long and tedious voyages in ox-carts were gone. The Canadian Pacific Railway had just entered upon its successful career, and as one of Taché's missionaries had been of very material assistance in its construction, the latter had received from the company privileges which he felt honoured to share with his ecclesiastical superior.

The difficulties which attended the laying of the steel rails from Winnipeg to the Pacific were not all of a physical order. Puzzled at first at the labours of the gangs of workmen who unceremoniously tore the bosom of their native prairies, the proud children of the plains had soon become incensed at the hardness of the pale-faced strangers. Their irritation reached a climax when they were told of the wave of immigration of which the iron horse was but the forerunner and instrument. The Blackfeet especially made themselves conspicuous by their opposition to the enterprise, and formally notified the

workmen that they must stop meddling with land that was not theirs and return to their country, wherever that might be.

Fortunately, the foremen had made the acquaintance of Father Lacombe, and were aware of his immense influence over the redskins. In their distress they appealed to him. The missionary lost no time in repairing to the scene of the trouble; but, perfectly familiar with aboriginal usage, he did not go empty-handed. Having bought a quantity of tobacco and some victuals, he gave to his indignant children one of those feasts without which no serious business can be transacted among the braves of the west.

When they had smoked and eaten to their hearts' content, he reminded them of all he had done for them in the past.

"Did I ever give you an ill-advised counsel?" he asked.

"Never," they confessed.

"Have I not always shown myself your best friend on earth?"

"Always."

Then in impassioned language he cautioned the young men, who are everywhere empty-headed, against the presumptuous use of violence towards the whites who, in their own country, are numerous as the mosquitoes on a sultry day, and would never leave unavenged any wrong done their fellows. He expatiated on the advantages of a railway; and gave

assurances that the tribe's lands would ever be respected.

As a result, work was resumed, and now Archbishop Taché had a special car at his disposal when he first visited Regina and, later on (September 21, 1884), Calgary.

This last place had then scarcely outgrown its embryotic period. In spite of its commanding situation, it had not seemed called to any higher destiny than that of a military post, until the day when it was learnt that the C. P. R. authorities had abandoned the route *via* Battleford and Edmonton for that through the south and Rogers' Pass. Soon enough the white tents of the workmen were sighted to the east of Fort Calgary, which, in an incredibly short time, were pitched in the shadow of its stockade. Independently of the mounted police, the settlement had so far consisted of two stores and a few huts occupied by whites and halfbreeds, and the mission was a house whose first story was taken up with a large apartment doing duty as a church. In the wake of the railway workmen pressed a number of merchants and speculators. Eight days after the arrival of the first locomotive, more than fifty of their tents dotted the angle made by the junction of the Bow and Elbow Rivers, many of which were shortly after replaced by houses. Then, from Eastern Canada and even Europe, came on the trains tradesmen and settlers, who established themselves in the place and immediate vicinity.

Such was the origin of Calgary, now the Queen of Southern Alberta, which was already assuming the airs of a young town when Taché visited it.

On his return journey, he called at his beloved mission of Qu'Appelle, twenty-four miles from the line. The buildings of the Industrial School, against the establishment of which Governor Dewdney had fought so hard, were just being finished, with financial assistance from Ottawa, but on land bought by the archbishop himself. Three sisters were expected, who arrived October 21st of that year and opened school to over fifty Indian children. Father Lebreton was the superior of the establishment, with a reasonable salary from the Federal authorities of Canada. Mgr. Taché was delighted with the prospects of the school, and thanked God for having inspired him with such a persevering zeal for its foundation.

Among the personnel of that mission was then a young priest, a man of few words and deep counsels, Rev. Prisque J. Magnan, who, arrived in April, 1884, was to pass there long and useful years as director of the same before he was called to higher functions.*

After this visit, Taché's trip became an episcopal tour of inspection, in the course of which he saw his dear parishes of St. Joseph, St. Pie, St. Jean-Baptiste, Fort Alexander, and, from January to April of 1885, St. Norbert, Ste. Agathe, Notre-Dame de

*Father Magnan is to-day Provincial of Manitoba, with residence at Winnipeg.

Lorette, Ste. Anne des Chênes and Rat Portage (now Kenora). This place, which was then the abode of Father Baudin, was not reached before April 25, 1885. But we must not anticipate.

Most of these parishes had had for their first inhabitants French halfbreeds who, ill at ease within the narrow limits of a farm, had migrated northwards, and joined their compatriots born in the valley of the Saskatchewan, at St. Albert and vicinity, Ste. Anne and other missions. St. Laurent of Grandin was one of those halfbreed settlements. It saw, June 29, 1883, the arrival of Bishop Grandin, accompanied by a band of Faithful Companions of Jesus, the new Order of nuns which the metropolitan had already introduced in his own archdiocese.

These religious, who were already favourably known in England, had their mother-house at the famous shrine of Ste. Anne d'Auray, in Brittany. They were highly recommended by Princess Louise, and the Marquess of Lorne had also furnished them with the most flattering credentials.

Four of the good sisters were stationed among the halfbreeds of St. Laurent, while an equal number were proceeding to Prince Albert, where the population was largely white and English-speaking. In both places they started schools, but with unequal success. At Prince Albert their services were immediately appreciated by Protestants and Catholics; so much so indeed that some of the former declared that no better schools than theirs existed anywhere

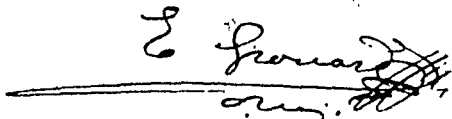
throughout Ontario. At St. Laurent public recognition of their usefulness was slower, because French halfbreeds are never so quick to appreciate the advantages of education, and because local conditions, such as the crossing of the Saskatchewan, militated against regular attendance. Nevertheless, even there success was bound to crown the efforts of the new teachers, and, before the end of 1883, they had enrolled fifty children.

Meantime, the zeal for education which has ever been characteristic of the Catholic Church—the foundress of the great universities and many famous schools—was prompting even the priests to teach the children when no brothers or sisters were available. Thus at McLeod, a border town none too orderly, which scarcely counted sixty Catholics, Father Vantighem was daily performing the duties of a schoolmaster for the benefit of about ten boys.

Even within Bishop Faraud's vicariate-apostolic analogous cares were engrossing the attention of the missionaries, though the beneficiaries of their favours were mere Indian lads. Father Grouard, of Lac la Biche, was not exactly teaching, but he provided the teachers with the means of following their avocation by printing for them and their pupils books in the native languages. In this task he could even occasionally boast the assistance of an episcopal type-setter in the person of the vicar-apostolic himself.

When not busy in the press or composing room, he

was setting out in quest of souls to strengthen in the path of duty, or attending sick calls which at times led to what we might consider fool's errands, were we not assured that every step of the missionary is faithfully entered in the book of life. Thus, in the course of 1882, two Chippewayans called him to the death-bed of two of their compatriots. Grouard hurriedly left with them and, after five days of forced marching, he arrived at their camp in time to learn that they had just been buried!



FATHER GROUARD'S SIGNATURE.

The same father was now (1883) ordered to Peace River, where the Catholic missions were stagnating, owing to the extremely inconstant character and nomadic habits of the Indians, as well as the little familiarity of the priests with their dialects. The abject poverty of the missionary stations on that stream might also have contributed to render more or less barren the exertions of the fathers. In all sincerity, it is hard to see what respect the coarse mind of the roving Beaver Indians could entertain for ministers of religion who had to act as beasts of burden, pulling their own sleighs for the lack of animals, and living on potatoes when they were lucky enough to possess a sufficiency of the same.

The struggle for life in that isolated valley, where all the commodities of civilization were so hard to procure that flour could scarcely be got at twenty-five cents a pound, was indeed the first and last duty of man, even of the missionary, who had perforce to become farmer that he might live to preach the word of God. Farmer, therefore, we find Father Grouard at St. Charles of Dunvegan, in the company of genial Father Husson and devoted Bro. Renault who, in spite of his advanced age, rendered the greatest services. His zeal for the material interests of the poor mission excited the admiration even of the Protestant clergyman, who did not cease to wonder how it was that his "own evangelical denomination could not beget such devotedness in men who were not even in holy orders."

On the other hand, charity and neighbourly feelings were not less prominent at St. Charles Mission than devotion to duty. Even antagonists profited by those Christian dispositions, and as, for instance, the Anglican minister could not alone put up his stacks of hay, Father Husson good-naturedly volunteered to help him in that unclerical task.

Even the missionary bishops had occasionally to stoop to such manual labour, though travelling and visiting the different posts under them occupied most of their time. Mgr. Faraud was then tormented by excruciating pains of a nervous nature; hence he generally stayed at Lac la Biche, leaving

it to his active coadjutor of Providence to travel through his vicariate-apostolic, one of the largest and certainly the most trying in the whole world. Yet he felt the responsibility of his charge, and, just before he sent Father Grouard to Peace River, he personally made a long and exceedingly difficult visitation of the Mackenzie missions, the incidents of which need not be here related after all the details we have already given on similar expeditions.

Moreover, events of an overwhelming importance were now slowly shaping themselves, which call for our undivided attention.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE SASKATCHEWAN REBELLION.

1884-1885.

By the end of 1882, and during the first weeks of 1883, the employees of the Parliament buildings at Ottawa became familiar with the sight of a venerable gentleman of noble mien, yet simple bearing, tall and erect in spite of his snow-white hair, which was evidently due more to cares and anxieties than to the hand of time. This was Mgr. Grandin.

He had left his distant plains and lakes to come and plead the cause of his people, especially those of mixed blood. Civilization, which had caused the influx of so many to the Saskatchewan valley, was now advancing with giant strides, and with it the fear for the halfbreeds of another expropriation of their homes and holdings. It was the repetition of the situation in 1869, with this all-important difference that the natives of Manitoba had to stand the provocation of a power which had no jurisdiction over them, while in the Saskatchewan there was a regularly appointed and incontestable authority.

Unfortunately that very authority was the cause of the uneasiness which prevailed among all classes, English as well as French, inasmuch as it seemed unable to grasp the real state of affairs in that far-

off territory. As early as February 1, 1878, the inhabitants of St. Laurent had complained of the uncertainty in which they were left by the negligence of the Ottawa Government to settle the land difficulties of the halfbreeds. They wanted proper surveys made for their lands and grants of scrips similar to those already bestowed on their Manitoban compatriots. Identical claims were made and petitions sent from many places, such as St. Albert, in March, 1878; Prince Albert, June, 1878; Cypress Hills, in the course of the same year; Duck Lake, February 23, 1880; Qu'Appelle, 1881, and elsewhere. The redressing of those grievances was now all the more impatiently awaited as it was known that a trans-continental railway was nearing completion, which was expected to increase enormously the wave of immigration already rolling over the prairie.

High personages such as Archbishop Taché (January 27, 1878), Governor Laird (September 30, 1878), the Anglican Bishop McLean (January 18, 1879), Colonel Richardson (December 1, 1879), and others, had also sent to the Dominion authorities memoirs asking for a speedy settlement of the difficulties; but so far the results had been very unsatisfactory. Under date November 22, 1881, the Federal Government had even denied that the halfbreeds had any legitimate grievances, because, forsooth, treaties had been made with the Indians! Hence Bishop Grandin's mission, on which he had left in October, 1882.

Land surveyors had then arrived who, in conformity with repeated requests, were following the mode of surveying proper to Quebec, because, in order to be near one another and the more easily attend church, the halfbreeds had everywhere settled along lakes and rivers, on claims with a very narrow frontage, but two miles deep. Suddenly the wire flashed the order that all surveying must be made by square townships. This meant the annihilation of all the improvements so far accomplished; the huddling together of nine or ten families on the same claim; the destruction of the halfbreed homes, and the dismemberment of entire colonies.

The people of St. Albert immediately protested; but for fifteen days the telegraph proved unavailable. Therefore, in spite of their poverty, they subscribed a goodly sum towards defraying the expenses of two delegates, Father Leduc and Mr. B. Maloney, who left for Ottawa, January 27, 1883.

On their way, those gentlemen received an analogous commission, with corresponding pecuniary aid, from Fort Saskatchewan, an English-speaking community, and reached destination March 15th of the same year.

The burden of their mission was a demand for: first, a special survey at St. Albert; second, the gratuitous concession of the lands already occupied; third, the opening of a land office; fourth, the reduction of the pre-emption fee to what it was at the time land had been taken; fifth, the right of rep-

resentation in the legislature; sixth, the abolition of certain taxes on timber; seventh, the creation of a registry bureau, and eighth, the right of the half-breeds and their children to special lands throughout the Northwest Territories.

After much waiting and by dint of keeping themselves in the eyes of the Crown ministers, Father Leduc and his co-delegate obtained most of these advantages. Unfortunately there were but promises made, which nobody in official circles seemed anxious to transform into facts.

Meantime the halfbreeds were getting impatient. Everywhere assemblies were being held to ventilate the unredressed grievances, and expatiate on the dilatoriness and apparent bad faith of the Federal Government. Finally in May, 1884,¹ a committee composed of Messrs. James Isbister, Gabriel Dumont, Moïse Ouellette and Michel Dumas was formed with the object of going to Montana, seven hundred miles distant, and requesting L. Riel, the quondam President of the Provisional Government of Red River, to come and help them secure their rights.

Since we parted with him, Riel had had an eventful career. Though outlawed by the Federal Government, he had repeatedly been elected to the

¹All contemporaneous documents have it June instead of May; but as Riel's letter of acceptance is dated 5th June, and the delegates had to cover an immense distance and wait one day before receiving an answer, they could not have received their mission during the same month.



GABRIEL DUMONT

Dominion Commons by his grateful compatriots. He had even once signed his name in the members' register at Ottawa, after which he had been obliged to flee for his life. Wherever he went he seemed to be shadowed by Orange hirelings, eager to earn the \$5,000 put on his head. The strain on the mind of the naturally excitable halfbreed had been too much for him, and as the result of a mental collapse he had to seek rest and safety in the asylums of Beauport and Longue Pointe.

After a period of treatment he wandered through the United States, becoming finally stranded at St. Peter's Mission, Montana, where he taught school under the Jesuit fathers, and employed his leisure hours in writing verse expressive of his gratitude for his benefactor, Mgr. Taché, and of the deepest resentment against Sir John A. Macdonald and compereers in the Government, whom he regarded as the cause of his misfortunes. He had also married, and was now the father of two children.

When summoned north by the halfbreed delegation, he asked for twenty-four hours to consider the proposal, at the end of which he left with his family, but with the intention of coming back "early this fall."²

On the banks of the Saskatchewan Riel was received as a saviour by English and French alike. And here we may point to a slight inaccuracy in

²Riel's letter to the delegates, 5th June, 1884, in Begg's "History of the North-West," vol. III., p. 186, and elsewhere.

Begg's account of these events. This author states that "English as well as French settlers along the Saskatchewan thought that they were being unfairly treated by the Dominion, but the introduction of Riel into the difficulty at once left the French alone in the agitation."⁸

This is certainly incorrect. Indeed the same writer contradicts himself on this point within a few pages. He asserts that "as early as 1877 one hundred and fifty *Scotch* halfbreeds of Prince Albert petitioned the Government to instruct the surveyors to establish boundaries of their buildings," and from that time *till the outbreak* [italics ours] in 1885, the old settlers and halfbreeds of the Northwest kept on an unavailing agitation to obtain this very reasonable concession."⁹ He moreover quotes a letter wherein Father André writes Riel that "it would be a great disappointment to the people of Prince Albert if [he] did not come."¹⁰ The reader remembers that the population of that town was mostly English. Lastly, Begg admits that, after Riel's arrival, about the first of July, 1884, "many of the English settlers sympathized with the movement, and countenanced the agitation, hoping thereby to induce the Government to come to their assistance."¹¹

The truth is that the good the halfbreed leader

⁸*Op. cit.*, p. 184.

⁹*Sic* probably for "holdings."

¹⁰*Ibid.*, *ibid.*, p. 183.

¹¹Begg, "History of the North-West," vol. III, p. 187.

¹²*Ibid.*

had accomplished in Manitoba was generally realized, and had his mind been able to stand the strain of a new agitation, there was no reason to fear lest he might not have led the movement to a successful issue.

He entered upon his new public career by asking the blessing of a priest, and for some time he was very moderate and prudent in his counsels. As a further proof that the English-speaking coöperated with him, we see, a fortnight after his arrival, Stipendiary Magistrate Matthew Ryan writing to the press (July 15, 1884), a long letter which embodied the grievances of Riel's compatriots. The justice of these was strongly defended by the Council of the Northwest (July 21st).

At that time dissatisfaction was general among the people of the Saskatchewan, Indians as well as halfbreeds; so much so indeed that nobody can to-day absolve from criminal negligence the Ottawa authorities who persistently ignored such a patent fact. Government farm instructors were then being assaulted by rebellious Crees under Poundmaker, who defied thirty members of the mounted police to arrest the guilty party; after which the famous chief, still in his war dress, asked Father Cochin to write a note giving him power to help himself to the soldiers' provisions.⁸

Political meetings were held in various places, at some of which the Catholic clergy assisted, in order

⁸*Missions des O. M. I.*, vol. XXI., p. 28.

to check the growing boldness of Riel. Gradually, however, a chasm was created between priests and people, because the latter, tired of waiting for the acknowledgment of their rights, became suspicious that the restraining action of the former was dictated by a desire to please those in power at the expense of their flocks. With contradiction Riel became more and more irritable, and, unable to hold his own in discussions with the priests, he convoked secret assemblies wherein he endeavoured to undermine the influence of those he was already beginning to regard as his enemies.

When reasoned with he was violent, and fell into excesses of language which he was generally the first to regret afterwards. Profoundly religious though he was, it became sadly evident that politics were leading him into a whirlpool wherein even his orthodoxy was wrecked. In a word, the turmoil of the agitation was bringing on a return of the disease which had sent him to Beauport.

This became so plain that, at a meeting of all the priests of the district, it was unanimously decided that the agitator was not *compos mentis*, and therefore should not be admitted to the sacraments.*

At length, the Government seemed, but too late, to realize the gravity of the situation. On March 4, 1885, scrips were granted by telegraph to such of the halfbreeds as had not received any in Manitoba. But either because unscrupulous whites fomented

**Affaires du Nord-Ouest*, Father André's Testimony, p. 137.

the revolt with an eye to personal advantages,¹⁰ or because Riel could no longer control himself and was resolved to bring matters to a climax, a provisional government was formed, March 18, 1885, with Riel as president and Gabriel Dumont as military leader.¹¹ At the same time several stores were raided at St. Laurent, prisoners were taken and men enrolled on all sides, whether they consented or not. And the more the Catholic clergy opposed such a course, the greater became the breach between the Church and the halfbreed tribune.

The latter had established his headquarters at St. Antoine, or Batoche;¹² he now forcibly seized the village church, which he converted into a barracks in spite of Father Moulin's protests. Then, in keeping with his great religious instincts, a public show of which was now all the more needed as the naturally docile Métis felt uneasy at the opposition of their spiritual guides, Riel hoisted a flag of his own making, with the ten commandments inscribed on a

¹⁰Just as the rebellion was on the point of breaking out, a white man passing at Batoche told the halfbreeds that they were pretty soon to be silenced, as five hundred of the mounted police were coming to bind their leader in chains.

¹¹Gabriel Dumont was a unique character, a child of nature, but slightly polished up by religion, brave to the point of rashness, and confiding as a child in his relations with those he considered his superiors. He was born in Manitoba (1838) of Isidore Dumont, whose father had been a French-Canadian from Montreal, and of Louise Laframboise, likewise a French halfbreed. He was a typical buffalo hunter, and remained unlettered all his life. He died at Bellevue, Sask., 19th May, 1906.

¹²So named after a wealthy French halfbreed, who absented himself rather than take part in the rebellion, through which he eventually lost everything he possessed there.

white field. He also commenced leading a life of great asceticism, fasting and praying unremittingly in a sort of oratory wherein were exposed to view, along with a cross and some holy pictures, an old letter of Bishop Bourget, of Montreal, whom he intended to place on the pontifical throne after he had deposed Leo XIII., and a special blessing for the halfbreeds which he had made Bishop Grandin sign the previous autumn.

He furthermore assured his followers that no harm was to befall them, but that they were under the special protection of God, though his mistaken ministers were against them. We must say that, at first, these assurances did appear to be partially borne out by facts. On March 26th, Major Crozier, who was in command at Fort Carlton, having sent sleighs escorted by about forty men to bring in from Duck Lake provisions belonging to a Mr. Mitchell, Gabriel Dumont prevented them from accomplishing their mission. Thereupon Crozier himself left for Duck Lake with a force of one hundred men and a cannon. On the way he also took with him the forty soldiers who had been turned back.

Dumont claimed afterwards that he had with him only twenty-five horsemen, with some unmounted followers, when he encountered Crozier's troop of one hundred and forty men some distance from Duck Lake. The halfbreeds are also unanimous in asserting that the first shot was fired by the red-coats,

whose initial volley laid low an Indian, after Dumont's own brother had been killed by the discharge of a rifle from the ranks of the enemy. Encouraged by Riel, who held up in sight of all Father Touze's Oblate crucifix he had wrenched from its owner, the halfbreeds reciprocated with a will. Their excellent marksmanship from a place of vantage soon began to tell on the soldiers, who were put to flight in not more than half an hour. Crozier lost twelve killed, as against four on the side of the halfbreeds. Among those slightly hit was Gabriel Dumont himself, who received a scalp wound. This forced him to retire momentarily, when his brother Edouard took up the command.

As the troops were fleeing from the field, Dumont wanted to pursue them and profit by their demoralization; but Riel, who was ever animated by humane sentiments even when these appeared out of place, prevented such a course, under the plea that "too much blood had already been shed." Soon thereafter the mounted police evacuated Fort Carlton, to effect their junction with the volunteers of Prince Albert. Dumont was for intercepting them; but he had again to yield to Riel's restraining orders.

After this victory, the new "president" ruined his cause by sending couriers to the various Indian tribes, with letters and tobacco, inciting them to rise and seize as much as they could of arms and ammunition in the different stores, previous to coming and helping their kinsmen, the halfbreeds. Several bands

of pagan Crees obeyed the summons; but the priests immediately set upon thwarting that movement to the best of their ability. Father Lacombe kept the Blackfeet at peace;¹³ Father Paquette did the same with the Crees of Green Lake, and Father Collignon with those of Lac la Biche, while Fathers Végreville, Moulin, Fourmond, Legoff, Leduc and others made themselves prominent in enforcing legality and keeping down the malcontents who would otherwise have joined Riel's forces.

At St. Albert the immense influence of saintly Mgr. Grandin himself kept at bay the halfbreeds of the mission, in spite of their well-known state of dissatisfaction. Through the agency of the Catholic missionaries, corps of volunteers were even organized at that place as well as at Lac la Biche and Ile à la Crosse, with a view to protecting these missions against the rebels.

This energetic opposition exasperated Riel. He condemned to death some of the priests, but never laid hands on them, though he verbally abused such as he would meet. One day he approached Father

¹³ "A messenger of peace had preceded him [Gen. Strange] in the person of the venerable Father LaCombe, who alone, and at the worst season of the year for travelling, had visited all the Indian reserves, and by his Christian diplomacy had persuaded the savages to maintain a strict neutrality. . . . Had the western Indians joined their brothers of the east and north, this history would have had more serious events to record, for the Blackfeet, Piegans, Bloods, Circes and Assiniboines were known to be the most warlike and cruel tribes on the plains. Father LaCombe's visit, just at the critical moment, and his intimate friendship with Crowfoot and other powerful chiefs, was, without doubt, a principal cause in keeping these formidable tribes in check" (Begg, "Hist. of the N.W.," vol. III., p. 237).

Fourmond with several of his confrères, and announced to them that he "had been appointed by the council to be thenceforth their spiritual director"; to which Father Fourmond answered that the only way for him to fill such functions was to have the priests shot, as he could then do with them as he pleased.¹⁴

Then the head of the unfortunate became more unbalanced and his religious theories more heterodox. According to the theological system engendered by his diseased brain, only the first of the three Divine Persons was God. Hence in reciting the Hail Mary his poor deluded followers had to say: "Holy Mary, mother of the Son of God," instead of "mother of God." He had also on the Real Presence strange and even absurd notions. The Church he now condemned and derided as the Old Roman Woman; after he had brought to a successful issue the little trouble on his hands just then, he was to go and establish the Papacy in the New World, and because the priests refused to hear the confessions of the rebels, he did not scruple to take himself their place in that delicate ministry. He moreover posed as a prophet, claimed to be favoured with visions, etc.

In all of this there is no doubt in our mind that he was sincere, instead of playing a rôle, as many have believed who could not understand his make-up and the real state of his mind. Innumerable facts

¹⁴*Affaires du Nord-Ouest*, p. 139.

could be adduced to show that he was no more responsible for his acts.¹⁵ But some of their consequences were truly appalling.

We have already mentioned in the preceding pages Father Fafard, an able French Canadian priest, who had created a fine establishment at Frog Lake, where he strove, aided at times by a neighbouring younger missionary from France, Father Marchand, to do good to Indians who but imperfectly corresponded to God's graces. Among the native chiefs who had risen at Riel's bidding was the pagan Cree known as Big Bear, an Indian who commanded over the natives of Fort Pitt. On Holy Thursday, April 2, 1885, immediately after the morning service, which his men had deliberately disturbed, both priests as well as the whites of the locality were summoned to the warrior's camp. Among those that took part in that sad procession were Tom Quinn, the Indian agent, and Mr. Delaney, the farm instructor.

It appears that the latter suddenly refused to go on; whereupon, according to an eye-witness (a Mr. Cameron), "the Indians raised their guns and rushed at him. Father Fafard dashed up and placed himself in front of the menacing Indians, but was overpowered by numbers, and thrown down," when he was shot. "Father Marchand was meanwhile attempting to keep the Indians from going after the woman [a Mrs. Simpson]. When he saw that Father

¹⁵For instance, his sudden transitions from the most violent anger to extreme politeness towards the same persons, and other acts attested under oath by priests (*Ubi supra*, pp. 137, 139, 140).

Fafard had been killed, he attempted to push his way to the crowd of Indians to reach the body,¹⁶ but they resisted. He was a wiry man and fought hard."¹⁷ Then an Indian rushed up and shot him dead. Seven other whites were slain with the priests and some women taken prisoners.

Such was the Frog Lake Massacre, in which both missionaries fell martyrs to charity, Father Fafard having succumbed because he insisted on saving Delaney, and his confrère because he was no less firm in his determination to give spiritual aid to his senior.¹⁸

The bodies of the two martyrs were thrown into the basement of the church, which had previously been despoiled of all its ornaments, sacred vessels, etc. While coming out, the murderers were amazed to see (or thought they saw) the large picture of the

"Evidently to give his murdered confrère a last absolution in case he was still living.

"It appears that Father Fafard was not instantly killed. An Indian who wished him well bade him remain motionless, so that he might pass for dead. But pain or some other reason caused a nervousness which betrayed him, and a bad Christian whom he had prevented from divorcing his wife shot him point-blank.

"Father Fafard was born 8th June, 1850, at St. Cuthbert, diocese of Montreal. He made his perpetual vows as an Oblate 29th June, 1874, and left the following year for the missions of St. Albert, where he was ordained 8th Dec., 1875. At the time of his death he was superior of a missionary district. Father Marchand was born 8th April, 1858, at Chateaugiron, diocese of Rennes, France. He made his perpetual Oblation 8th Dec., 1882, when he was sent to Ottawa to finish his theological studies. Bishop Grandin ordained him priest in Sept., 1883, and gave him as a socius to Father Fafard. Since the autumn of 1884 he was in charge of an outpost at Onion Lake, some 25 miles from Frog Lake, and had presumably come to his superior, that both might have the Holy Week ceremonies together, and therefore performed in a more thorough manner than could have been possible for a single priest.

Sacred Heart take a threatening attitude, and bespeak by a significant motion of the hand the retribution that was in store for them. Therefore, to get rid of the unwelcome vision, the sacred edifice was set on fire.

Another missionary who had somewhat to suffer from the rebellion was Father Paquette. Riel having commanded him thenceforth to obey his orders in spiritual matters, Paquette not only refused, but left before daybreak to apprise the authorities of Fort Carlton of what was happening at Batoche. On his return at St. Laurent, he kept in hiding for a number of days several families who felt reluctant to participate in the rebellion. But, hearing of the Frog Lake massacre and being assured that his uncompromising opposition to the movement left him in a most dangerous position, he fled to Ile à la Crosse in the teeth of exceptionally cold weather, passing at Green Lake, where he deterred the Indians from pillaging the local store and emulating the other Cree bands in their revelry at the expense of the whites.

The sisters of St. Laurent had already endeavoured to escape to Prince Albert. They were now summoned to Batoche by Riel who treated them well. Yet, though they had not to complain of his men there assembled to the number of about 350, they were practically prisoners of war, as well as Fathers Végreville, Moulin, Fourmond and Touze, who had many reasons to complain of the treatment received at his hands.



THE MARTYRS OF FROG LAKE

Meantime, the Dominion authorities were not idle. Thoroughly aroused to the seriousness of the situation, they were sending to the theatre of the trouble troops which happened to be the very first passengers on the C. P. R. trains from the east. Winnipeg had also raised corps of volunteers who were hurrying to the Saskatchewan valley.

The halfbreeds were not without learning of the approach of the enemy. Neither were the impotent witnesses of their hopeless struggle. Father André, who had moved heaven and earth to prevent the outbreak, was now at Prince Albert, where most of the whites had taken refuge. Heedless of any feeling of revenge, and foreseeing the inevitable, he wrote on April 18th to the commander of the advancing troops, General Middleton, beseeching him to spare as much as he could the poor deluded halfbreeds, advising him that very few among them were really guilty of any other fault than that of weakness in yielding to bad counsels, if not to force. He therefore begged Middleton to give them a chance of making their submission, a course which the general pursued as soon as he reached the place where they had resolved to make their real stand.

Many a time did Gabriel Dumont, who seems to have been endowed with no mean military abilities, manifest the wish to go and harass the advancing column, keeping its men in a state of continual alarm and nervousness by means of night attacks until they were demoralized, when a final blow would be

struck by the combined halfbreed forces. But Riel, who was ever against shedding blood, temporized, as if he had thought of winning without fighting.

At last Dumont could stand it no longer. April 23rd he left Batoche with two hundred men, fifty of whom he had almost immediately to send back on hearing that Batoche was threatened with an attack by the mounted police. In a ravine near Fish Creek the leader hurriedly constructed rifle-pits, the disposition of which betrayed considerable strategical acumen. Then, with a few picked men, he went a short distance farther and engaged the enemy in the morning of the following day. He performed prodigies of valour, in spite of defections from his ranks (probably of men who had been forced into the movement). The Canadians were 350 against 130 halfbreeds; yet the latter managed to inflict serious losses to the former, who had ten men killed or mortally wounded, while Dumont's force lost only two halfbreeds with as many Indians.¹⁹

But what with such disproportionate numbers and, on the Canadian side, machine guns and shells

¹⁹A. Begg is mistaken when he writes that "Dumont had 280 halfbreeds under him in the fight" (*Op. cit.*, III, p. 213). As we have already seen, the halfbreed leader did not reach Fish Creek with more than 150. He then went ahead with 20 tried men, with whom he engaged the enemy, and after the desertions which thinned the ranks of his main troop during his skirmish, and the defections of several of his own companions in the vanguard, it is doubtful if he ever had as many as 130 men in action at any time of the battle. All agree that the total numbers of the rebels at Batoche never exceeded 350. It would have been sheer folly to leave the headquarters of the revolt with only 70 men, when it was known that hundreds of whites were under arms at Prince Albert. Moreover, Riel was not sure of many of his men.

which penetrated into the most inaccessible retreats, the contest was altogether too unequal. Dumont, therefore, fell back on Batoche with such of his men as had remained with him.

Meantime, the band of Chief Poundmaker, whose state of dissatisfaction we have already noticed, had raised the standard of revolt, making prisoner Mr. J. Mackay, their farm instructor, who had been exceedingly kind to them. They then sacked the town of Battleford, whose population had to shut themselves up in the local fort. Everything was destroyed on the south side of Battle River, and as Father Cochin, the incumbent of Ste. Angèle, was known to leave no stone unturned to counteract the insurrectionary movement, two hundred rebels on horseback made him prisoner with some of his people, after they had pillaged and burned houses, appropriated horses, destroyed the Catholic chapel and stolen its valuables.

Hearing of this, and apprehending lest Poundmaker should effect his junction with Big Bear, Colonel Otter sought out the rebel forces, whom he surprised on April 2nd. He was at the head of three hundred men, and the Indians in arms were about two hundred and sixty. The Canadians had also at their disposal a Gatling gun and two seven-pounders, which did good execution.

As soon as Father Cochin saw the troops, he tried to take to them his fellow prisoners by a roundabout way; but, being mistaken for an hostile, he

was greeted by a shower of bullets. The battle lasted from 5 A.M. to 12, and such was the onslaught on the troops that it was wrongly surmised that some of Big Bear's people must have joined Poundmaker, and Colonel Otter had to withdraw. Here again the Indians repeated the fortunate blunder of the halfbreeds: instead of profiting by their advantage, their chief who, though a pagan, was more or less under the influence of the priest he had made his prisoner, cried out to his men to cease fire, because, he said, "if we shed any more blood, the Great Spirit will punish us for it."²⁰ The whites had eight men killed and twelve wounded, while, in spite of Begg's assertion that "there is no doubt the Indians lost heavily,"²¹ only five of them fell dead on the battlefield.²² Father Cochin buried himself a Protestant soldier. This affair has become known in history as the Battle of Cut Knife.

After this Col. Otter remained on the defensive at Battleford until he was joined by Gen. Middleton. The commander-in-chief had allowed his own troops to recuperate after the battle of Fish Creek, remaining in camp for several days, to the great annoyance of the people of Prince Albert, who could not under-

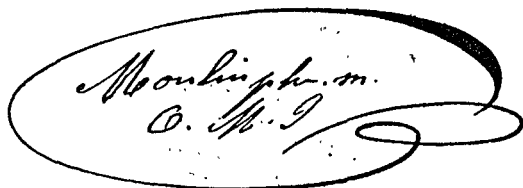
²⁰*Missions des O. M. I.*, vol. XXIII, p. 336.

²¹*Op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 217.

²²We have this from a missionary personally acquainted with what he writes of, Father A. H. Bigonnesse, O. M. I. (letter dated June 7th, 1885). Begg likewise over-estimates the number of Indians engaged in the battle, when he says that they were believed "to be over 500, including 50 halfbreeds" (*Ibid.*, p. 216, an evident exaggeration, even if we add to the number of the actual combatants the natives and halfbreeds they kept in captivity.

stand the cause of his inaction. Then a steamer arrived with a detachment of soldiers and a Gatling gun, and the general at last advanced on Batoche.

Useless to delay in a technical description of the long contest that ensued. During four days the half-breeds under Gabriel Dumont sustained the fire of an enemy five times their superior in numbers and provided with cannon and machine guns. Commenced Saturday, May 9th, the attack was vigorously repulsed, and it looked at first as if the assailants would have to give way. The halfbreeds were directing their fire from rifle-pits, the ingenious arrangement of which struck Middleton with astonishment and admiration. Then, on the 10th and

The image shows a handwritten signature, "Moulin F. M.", enclosed within a large, stylized oval frame. The signature is written in a cursive script. Below the main signature, there are some smaller, less legible markings that appear to be "C. M. I."

FATHER MOULIN'S SIGNATURE.

11th, the struggle went on with little damage to either side. This did not prevent Father Moulin from receiving (May 11th) a rebel bullet which caused a bad wound in his leg.

On the 12th, ammunition began to fail the half-breeds, who had to resort to pebbles and pieces of iron for balls. It was said at the time that Riel then wrote a letter of capitulation to Gen. Middleton, offering his own head as payment for the deeds of

his followers, but that he was prevented by a Mr. Swan and the young men from sending it to destination. However this may be, a vigorous charge of the Canadian troops dislodged the halfbreeds from their positions in the afternoon of the 12th, when more execution was done in their ranks than during the three previous days. Their total losses amounted to sixteen killed, among whom were a child and an old man of over eighty, with thirty wounded. The besiegers had only eight killed, half of whom were officers, and forty-six wounded.

Gabriel Dumont and others escaped to the United States. It is said that, had he so willed, Riel could easily have followed them thither; but he preferred to give himself up to the scouts. They found him, May 16th, and took him to Gen. Middleton, who handed him over to the civil authorities of Regina with most of his councillors.

On the 23rd of the same month, Poundmaker having heard of the collapse of the insurrection at Batoche, sent Father Cochin, who was constantly impressing on him the advisability of surrendering, to treat for peace with Col. Otter at Battleford.^{2a} With the priest were twenty-one prisoners the Indian chief was setting free as a preliminary to an understanding. Two days later Cochin returned to Poundmaker with a message from Middleton which

^{2a}It must be admitted that, personally, Poundmaker was not for unnecessary excesses; but his band had committed several outrages, going to the length of massacring the farm instructor of the Stoney Reserve, together with two other whites.

demanded unconditional surrender. This seemed rather hard on the victors of Cut Knife; but the instances of the priest made them yield (May 26, 1885).

Father Legoff had long been thought to have met the fate of Fathers Fafard and Marchand. He finally turned up as a prisoner in the hands of the Crees at Cold Lake. The backbone of the rebellion having been broken at Batoche, he, too, was deputed by his captors to negotiate terms of surrender. The answer was the same: no conditions.

This was in the first days of June. Big Bear held out longer. It was known that he had captured and was holding Fort Pitt. Like his confederates, he had a number of captives, among whom were some white women, and, in the light of the atrocities committed by some of his followers at Frog Lake and elsewhere, the worst was feared for them. But, with all the Canadian forces now available, his own capture was but a question of time. Hearing of the general failure of the movement, he thought for a moment of escaping the vigilance of the troops by making for the north when, on July 2nd, he was arrested at Carlton by a small detachment of police.²⁴

²⁴Neglecting the wounded, the casualties consequent on this ill-advised rebellion may be thus figured: Canadian soldiers who died in action or afterwards of their wounds, 39; halfbreeds and Indians killed in action, 29; massacred at Frog Lake and elsewhere, 12; executed at Regina and Battleford, 9. Total loss of life, 89.

CHAPTER XXXII.

RETRIBUTION.

1885-1886.

As a result of this ill-advised insurrection two Catholic priests had lost their lives; another had been seriously wounded; Father Paquette had remained in constant danger of death, and it was believed for some time that he had fallen a victim to the resentment of Indians and halfbreeds; Fathers Cochin and Legoff had been dragged from place to place by rebellious natives, who kept them under a standing threat of paying with their heads for their opposition to the movement; Father Scollen had likewise incurred what practically amounted to a sentence of death, though he managed to save the life of a Government courier; Fathers Végreville, Moulin, Fourmond and Tóuze had been kept prisoners at Batoche, and deprived even of the liberty of exercising their sacred ministry with the people that surrounded them. Finally, seven of the Catholic churches and adjoining missionary establishments had been utterly destroyed and their valuables stolen.

And yet such was the blind hatred for anything Catholic which animated the zealots who were ever prating about the influence of the French priests in

the insurrection of 1869 and distorting the facts of that movement out of all recognition, that they did not fear to lay the blame of the Saskatchewan rebellion at the doors of those very priests who "had done all that mortal men could possibly do to prevent it," and had become the first victims of it! It speaks ill for the love of truth and Christian charity which characterized even some ministers of the Gospel that they should have had the effrontery to ventilate in the public press those inventions of brains diseased by religious bigotry and racial fanaticism.²

So indignant were the victims of the rebellion that Father Leduc, as Vicar-General of St. Albert, deemed it his duty to set matters right in a letter he wrote in their name to the *Toronto Mail*, which was reproduced in *Le Manitoba* of June 25, 1885.

Had the eastern bigots taken the trouble to transport themselves to the theatre of the civil war, the contemplation of the ruins accumulated at all the

²Father Leduc, in *Missions des O. M. I.*, vol. XXIII., p. 434.

³To these cruelly unjust ministers the Rev. William Newton forms an honourable exception in his little book "Twenty Years on the Saskatchewan" (London, 1897). Mr. Newton, who is an Anglican clergyman, speaks from personal experience. After noting down many of the causes of the rebellion, which he puts to the account of the Ottawa authorities, he goes on to say of Riel: "He wanted to be a prophet, the founder of a new religion—a Moses on a small scale, who would lead his people into their own possession and drive out the nineteenth century Canaanites. He did not disclaim the murder of the priests at Frog Lake, and he separated the men under his influence, as much as he could, from the Roman Catholic Church" (*Op. cit.*, p. 90). Of Bishop Grandin and clergy the same author says: "On that and every occasion when I had met the Roman Catholic Bishop and his people, I am bound to say that I have received most graceful and kindly attentions" (*Ibid.*, p. 26).

Catholic establishments within the afflicted zone would have sufficed to disabuse their prejudiced minds. The loving heart of Mgr. Grandin would not allow him to wait for the end of the revolt. In spite of all remonstrances, he must leave St. Albert for the scene of the disorders, to survey the extent of the disaster, console the bereaved, and see what is to be done to remedy so great evils. As early as May 20th, he was leaving for Batoche when Col. Ouimet, of the 65th battalion, begged him to delay his departure, as he was fearful of its consequences among the disaffected of St. Albert and vicinity. But on the first of June he left after having sung a requiem for the victims of the war.

Impossible to describe the bishop's feelings as he visited the different places where the demon of discord had heaped ruins and ashes, and he beheld squalid Indians partly attired in priestly vestments stolen from the churches. Tears and sobs were for the big-hearted prelate an *obligato* accompaniment of all such visits. Yet he managed to preach repentance everywhere, had reparation ceremonies, and received the abjuration of such of the misguided Métis as had accepted the dreams of their irresponsible leader.

It is easily understood that his sorrow reached its climax when the ruins of the Frog Lake Mission reminded him of the great loss he had sustained in the persons of the two martyrs of charity. It also recalled to his mind the fact that, since his last voy-

age to Europe, he had lost "eight missionaries, of whom only two had died in their beds, the others having been frozen, drowned or massacred by the Indians."²⁸

Yet, as the true ministers of a crucified God could not think of revenge, he spent the tenth of July in preparing a petition begging for clemency towards the prisoners, which he afterwards caused to be signed by the English of Prince Albert, and in writing several letters on the same subject to the Ottawa ministers.

These were no doubt instrumental in ultimately assisting Grandin's unfortunate people, now in chains; but they could not save the author of the rebellion himself. Riel's cause was taken up, July 20, 1885, in presence of Mr. Justice Richardson, with Messrs. F. X. Lemieux, Charles Fitzpatrick* and J. N. Greenshields, as defending attorneys. The accused was granted only half a jury, all of whom were English. The plea of the defence was insanity, and all the alienists who had time to examine him adequately on politics and religion declared on oath that, on such questions, he was of unsound mind. Those who were of a different opinion admitted that they had either seen him only for a short time, or not discussed with him the subjects which had led him to the bar of criminals.

Yet, on the first of August, the jury brought in a

²⁸*Missions*, vol. XXIII., p. 312.

*To-day the Chief Justice of Canada.

verdict of guilty, with a recommendation to mercy. But the judge immediately condemned him to be hanged on the following 18th of September.

Tremendous indignation at the sentence was manifested throughout Quebec, and petitions were sent to the Federal authorities to have it commuted in conformity with the English jury's own desire, petitions which were offset by counter demands from Ontario and the Orange lodges throughout Canada, that the "arch-rebel," as they called him, be speedily executed. No person in his sane mind will deny that if this course was taken in preference to following the implicit direction of the jury before whom Riel was tried, it was not on account of the part he took in the rebellion of 1885, from which medical science absolved him, but because of the shooting of Scott, of which he was not then accused, and for which he had already undergone five years' banishment.⁵ His own execution must therefore be looked at in the light of a miscarriage of justice. In spite of a perfect avalanche of protests and after two respites had been granted, he was executed in the morning of November 16, 1885:

Even his enemies admit that Louis Riel marched to death like a man, and Christians must be pleased

⁵Even the *Orange Sentinel*, the organ of Orangeism in Canada, practically admitted this in some of its articles, as when, for instance, it said (6th Aug., 1885): "We affirm that it is the Government's duty not to mind the recommendation to mercy, but on the contrary, the interests of the entire Dominion demand that the law be allowed to follow its course," because "he has committed a most detestable and atrocious murder on the person of a loyal Protestant subject" (quoted after a French version).

to learn that, after having abjured errors due to his overworked brain, he died like a saint. Father André had spent many weeks preparing him for the fatal moment. In the quiet of seclusion, his mind gradually got over his strange ideas, and he saw with clearness the wrong he had done. In the first days of November he wrote out his testament, as touching and Christian-like a document as history records, of which we regret our inability to quote more than the following extracts:

"Men having fixed the 10th of November next as the day of my death, and it being possible that the sentence will be executed, I declare beforehand that my submission to the orders of Providence is sincere. Under the influence of Divine grace and our Lord Jesus Christ, my will is ranged with entire liberty of action on the side of the Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I was born in her, and it is by her that I have been led into the way of grace. . . . I have retracted what I have said and professed contrary to her teaching, and I retract it again. I ask pardon for the scandal I have caused. I do not wish that there should be a difference between me and the priesthood of Jesus Christ as great as the point of a needle."

He then thanks in touching terms for their past benefactions his mother, brothers and sisters, as well as his wife and his friends north and south of the international boundary; after which he pardons with his whole heart those who have persecuted

[him], who have without any reason made war on [him] for five years, who have given [him] the semblance of a trial, who have condemned [him] to death." Finally, after having exhorted his children to "obedience to the Church, their masters and superiors," he addresses them in the following terms:

"I do not leave to my children gold or silver, but I beg God in His infinite pity to fill my mind and my heart with the true paternal blessing which I wish to give them. Jean, my son, Marie-Angélique, my daughter, I bless you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, so that you may be attentive to know the will of God and faithful to accomplish it in all piety and in all sincerity; that you may practice virtue solidly, but simply, without parade or ostentation. . . . I bless you that your death may be sweet, edifying, good and holy in the eyes of the Church and in that of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

At 2 A.M. of the very day of his execution, he wrote a parting letter to his mother, for which we regret to have no space here.* We also wish we could reproduce the details of his execution given by the *Regina Leader*, a paper which had previously shown itself constantly hostile to his cause. He was assisted on the scaffold by his confessor, Father André, and a Rev. Mr. McWilliams. "Riel, then, in an affecting and child-like way, prayed God to bless his

*See Appendix E.

mother, his wife, his brothers, his friends and his enemies." His last minutes on earth were an act of sacrifice, as he renounced, at the instance of Father André, the idea which he had entertained of making a speech. He died while reciting the Lord's prayer. His body was then taken to St. Bonifacé and buried in the shadow of the cathedral.

The other prisoners were tried in September of the same year, and eleven Indians were sentenced to be hanged on November 27th, three of whom were eventually imprisoned for life. The eight others embraced the true faith as a preparation for death, and, when executed at Battleford, they were assisted by Fathers Cochin and Bigonnesse.

On the other hand, eleven halfbreeds who, before 1885, had enjoyed a most excellent record were sentenced to seven years in the penitentiary; three others to three years, and four to one year. We may also add that the Chief Poundmaker soon followed the examples of his congeners, being regenerated in the waters of baptism February 18, 1886, with twenty-eight other natives. Mgr. Taché graciously consented to stand godfather to the Cree chief. As to Big Bear, he was likewise admitted into the Catholic Church a short time later. Thus was it shown

The Leader. Wolseley said of Riel: "He is a man of considerable moral determination, although all who know him say that he is wanting in physical courage ("The Red River Expedition," p. 214). His aversion for the shedding of blood was probably responsible for this last qualification. His end proved that, if Wolseley was a correct exponent of public opinion, that opinion was groundless.

once more that the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians.

Thanks to the intervention of the archbishop, the prisoners were one after another set free after a few months, or at most a year and a half, of detention.

While events of such dramatic nature were bringing to God natives who had so far refused to hearken to the voice of his ministers, other Indians in less favoured surroundings, who had already heard that voice, were insensibly drifting away from the path of rectitude they had embraced. The lack of missionaries, the activity of their opponents and, above all, the undisguised aid the latter generally received at the hands of their co-religionists in charge of the different posts, who often continued the work of the ministers after they had left, and also the liberalities these ministers lavished on such as cast their lot with them, all these conditions conspired to try the constancy of the Catholic neophytes who lived, as a rule, in abject poverty. At Fort Simpson, on the Mackenzie, and in a few places along the shores of Great Bear Lake, a certain number were gradually going over to schism and heresy.

The missionaries were the first to deplore these defections; but with their depleted ranks and extreme indigence, what could they do? One of them wrote that "while from Fort Wrigley (on the right bank of the Mackenzie) to beyond Fort Peel there are four Protestant missionaries, without counting

the Anglican bishop and a catechist, we are only two priests."⁸ On the other hand, though practicing charity as much as their limited means would allow, the Catholic priests were ever averse to any course that might be construed into an enticement to adopting the true faith and persevering in its profession.

Moreover, the votaries of heresy employed the most unlikely means to draw the benighted Indians to themselves. "One of the new ministers has a big box full of crosses, medals and prayer-beads," writes Father Séguin, of Good Hope. The missionary to the Loucheux then adds by way of comment: "Behold the devil who becomes a monk that he may the better deceive these poor people!"⁹

Nevertheless the priests were doing prodigies of valour, multiplying themselves, and gaily undergoing all sorts of dangers and privations. In May, 1885, Father Georges Ducot visited the natives of Keith Bay, on Great Bear Lake, after he had almost starved to death in the woods. Three of his dogs died of hunger, and he was himself reduced to the necessity of living on the fourth. That father was then stationed at Fort Norman, while Father de Kérangué helped at Good Hope Father Séguin, the apostle of the Loucheux. That same missionary was himself passing his life in constant danger of starvation, wresting, as it were, his daily bread by means of prayers and novenas to various saints in heaven.

⁸Father Geo. Ducot, 12th Feb., 1887.

⁹To Bishop Clut, 1st Feb., 1887.

Bro. Kearney, his devoted Irish companion, shared his poverty, and aided him with an occasional grouse or rabbit to eke out a living on those inhospitable shores.

In view of the inroads of Protestantism, Bishop Clut took it upon himself, in the absence of his superior (Mgr. Faraud) at Lac la Biche, to station a priest at Ste. Thérèse of Fort Norman, which had so far been visited at regular intervals only. There Catholic interests were now all the more threatened as a Rev. Mr. David N. Kirkby, the son of one of the very first Anglican missionaries to the north, was known to contemplate establishing himself at that post.

This fort was already proud in the possession of an Indian schoolmaster "who wrote English badly enough and spoke it even worse. Each of his threats of resigning his functions was met by an augmentation in his salary."¹⁰ The natives, who had at first embraced the true faith under the impulsion of energetic Father Grollier, had seen some of their numbers slip over to the sects, won as they were by the liberalities of the ministers. The chief of the Slaves, "himself a slave to his three wives and addicted to sorcery," writes Father Ducot, "had been the great instigator of this movement towards Protestantism. He confessed to me that he was far too generously treated by the ministers and received from them too many favours to think of abandoning

¹⁰Fr. Ducot in *Missions*, vol. XXIV., p. 423.

them. As for us," concludes the priest, "we do not purchase souls with tea or sugar; we win them over by our labours and sacrifices."¹¹

This was in 1886. In February of the following year, the same party was writing, as an illustration of the fact that the missionaries' troubles began at home, that he had been "deserted no less than seven times, under the most awkward circumstances, by *engagés* who had no other reason for their dereliction of duty than their dissatisfaction at the only fare he had at his disposal."¹²

Before leaving the northern solitudes for more cheering scenes, we will share the devoted missionary's satisfaction in assisting at the departure, by the end of May, 1885, of Bishop Bompas "of amusing memory," as he says, for Little Rapid, or Fort Wrigley, where, in spite of herculean efforts, ample promises and threatening words, he could not seduce the Indians, who preferred their poverty with the true faith to affluence in heresy.

We cannot close our chronicle of 1885 without mentioning a few more events, which the more engrossing drama of the Saskatchewan has led us to momentarily neglect. The first in point of importance, if not in chronological order, is the transfer of the St. Boniface College to the Jesuits. Archbishop Taché had long cherished the hope of handing it over to his own Congregation; but the Oblates are

¹¹*Ibid.*, *ibid.*, p. 424.

¹²*Ibid.*, vol. XXV., p. 365.

a missionary, not a teaching, Order, while it is admitted that the Jésuits are the most successful educators in the whole world. The 13th of August, 1885, was therefore a red-letter day for the venerable prelate: it witnessed the official transfer of his favourite institution to the famous society, represented by Rev. Father Lory and seven other fathers or scholastics as professors, assisted by four coadjutor brothers.

The first rector under the new management was a Frenchman, hailing from Auxerres, where he was born in 1830. Among his priestly companions was one who has since made his mark in the annals of the West, Father Lewis Drummond, its first prefect of studies.

Rev. Azarie Dugas having been freed from educational cares by the substitution of regular for secular priests at the college, was now at the disposal of his archbishop. He was appointed parish priest of the cathedral.¹³

We have next to chronicle the death of the very first Oblate within the limits of the archdiocese. For exactly forty years those missionaries had devoted themselves to the salvation of souls throughout that territory, and, in spite of severe labours and great privations, none had so far gone to his reward when, on August 4, 1885, Father Tissot breathed his last at St. Boniface. He was in his sixty-first year of

¹³We may also mention that in July, 1885, an excellent Catholic, Mr. L. A. Prud'homme, was appointed County Court judge.

age, a native of Côte d'Abroz, in Savoy, France, and had given thirty-seven years of good services to the West.

As if anticipating the departure for a better world of that good and faithful servant, another Oblate, young and willing, arrived at St. Boniface on March 15, 1885. This was Father Charles Cahill, who was at once appointed to the curacy of St. Mary's. Father Lavoie had administered that prosperous parish from October 1, 1882, to February 25, 1885, when Father Ouellette succeeded him as pastor and superior of the local Oblates.

The following year another death saddened the clergy of the archdiocese, but especially the community of the missionaries. Father Madore passed away September 13, 1886, after having spent eight years in the Middle West.

During that same year the duties of the episcopal office entailed for Mgr. Taché many displacements and long ceremonies, which became all the more fatiguing as the weight of years pressed more heavily on his shoulders. Pastoral visitations with attendant preaching and confirming, were unusually numerous during 1886. But these are simple routine work in the life of God's anointed; we cannot consistently give them the proportions of events in the history of the West Canadian Church. Moreover, with the completion (1885) of the transcontinental railway, travelling, at least within a certain radius, was now far different from what it had been. Hence

the numerous voyages of the archbishop to the east, in spite of his advancing age and infirmities.

These infirmities reminded him of the inevitable, and from time to time prompted earnest requests to Paris for an Oblate coadjutor. His prayers were long unheeded, and then explicitly refused.

Pending the appointment of a personal assistant in the discharge of his episcopal duties, the metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province which, in addition to St. Boniface, comprised the See of St. Albert and the Vicariates-Apostolic of Athabasca-Mackenzie and British Columbia, exulted in the contemplation of the progress made by the Church in those immense regions since his own arrival at St. Boniface, in 1845. Instead of being a mere dependency of Quebec, the same territory now formed four episcopal divisions. There were 24 secular priests within the same territory (from Lake Superior to the Pacific), as against 4 in 1845. Where at that date the Oblate Order counted only 2 members, it had in 1886 as many as 163, of whom 97 were priests. In 1845 the country had but 4 Grey Nuns; it now boasted 93, without counting 71 belonging to other institutions of women.

But the greatest contrast was perhaps afforded by the educational institutions under the control, direct or indirect, of the Church. In 1845 there were only 3 Catholic schools, with 120 children; in 1886 it rejoiced in the possession of no less than 120

such establishments with 4,517 pupils," to which we must add a well-equipped college, which, under the direction of 12 religious of the Society of Jesus, was now entering upon an era of prosperity which was to go on increasing every year.

"With these last figures in mind, some especially endowed reader will perhaps be able to understand what Lord Wolseley meant when, in his "Red River Expedition," pp. 201, 202, he stated explicitly that the priests "hoped to mould the Red River into what they would have described as a peaceable, orderly and contented people, but which in the exact and cold-blooded language of Protestantism meant an *ignorant* and superstitious peasantry." In the light of the fact that the Church never changes her policy on educational questions, some will perhaps suspect that the favourite of Mars was telling a deliberate untruth, unless, of course, we surmise that, "in the cold-blooded language of Protestantism," the more you establish schools in a country, the more ignorant you want its people to be.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONSECRATIONS AND COUNCIL.

1887-1889.

The event of 1887 for the Western Church was the solemn consecration of the cathedral of St. Boniface. Though commenced in 1862, the sacred edifice was not entirely finished until the above mentioned year. As it was of stone and now free of debt, two conditions required under the circumstances, Archbishop Taché asked Mgr. Fabre, of Montreal, to come and impart to it the supreme consecration the Church bestows on such of her temples as, by the proper requisites, preclude the possibility of eventual alienation from their sacred purpose.

The ceremonies attending such dedications are exceedingly long, and Mgr. Taché was unequal to the task of performing them. The entire population of St. Boniface turned out to witness them. During the solemn high mass which followed, three bishops were present, namely, Mgr. Taché, Mgr. Fabre, and Mgr. Laflèche, Taché's erstwhile superior at Ile à la Crosse, now Bishop of Three Rivers.

That event took place on September 18, 1887. Two days later Bishop Laflèche enjoyed a visit to his former parish of St. François-Xavier, on the Assiniboine. There he confirmed forty persons, whose

parents or grandparents had been his own parishioners in the heroic times of the colony. Then, September 22nd, he went with Archbishops Taché and Fabre to St. Norbert, whose brick church was likewise irrevocably consecrated to God, with the accompaniment of the same ceremonial as that which had been followed at St. Boniface. Finally, on the following Sunday, September 25th, took place the consecration of the church of St. Mary's in Winnipeg, at which a new prelate assisted, Mgr. D'Herbomez, Vicar-Apostolic of British Columbia, just arrived from Europe, where he had taken part in the General Chapter of the Oblates (1886). In each of the three ceremonies the consecrating bishop was Mgr. Fabre.

Soon after, Mgr. Grandin arrived at St. Boniface on his way to Ottawa, where urgent business called him. Despite the lessons it should have learned from the Saskatchewan rebellion, the Government of the Northwest was stooping to underhand means to discourage the use of the French language and diminish the influence of the Catholic missions within their territory. The two prelates consulted each other on those knotty points, and Taché requested his quondam coadjutor to solicit the assistance of their venerable brothers in the episcopate on behalf of the schools of the Northwest, for which they had already done much by means of special collections ordered to be taken in their respective dioceses.

With a view to forestalling the trammels of oppo-

sition which at times render so difficult the performance of good in a given line, Archbishop Taché had caused the nomination (December 21, 1887), to the post of Inspector of Catholic Schools of Mr. Albert Bétournay, son of the late judge of that name. A. Bétournay had made his studies in the college of St. Boniface, after which he had obtained his M.A. in the University of Manitoba. He spoke English and French with equal fluency; in spite of his youth he was therefore specially well qualified for that position. Yet, once that gentleman had reached Regina (February, 1887), he was kept at his desk like a subaltern, and allowed to inspect only what pleased those in power, and when it suited them to let him off.

Just then, as if to condemn the secret war that was already being waged against the Catholic schools in the Middle West of Canada, congratulations on their efficiency came from no less an authority than the official judges of the great Colonial Exhibition, which was (1887) closing in London. Mr. T. Bernier, the Superintendent of Roman Catholic Education in Manitoba, had sent to the metropolis copies of the daily exercises of the Catholic schools of the province, "not compositions prepared for the circumstance," he averred, but class exercises written or drawn as early as 1884, at a time when there was no question of an exhibition.

The Manitoban exhibit was universally admired, and the English newspapers praised it without stint.

The *Canadian Gazette*, of London, had the following in this connection: "The collection shows that there exists in one of the most recently organized provinces of the Confederation a school system which, while respecting the religious feelings and creeds of the people, imparts to all an education which can raise up to the highest rank in society the child reared under its auspices."¹

Diplomas and medals were sent to the academy of the Grey Nuns at St. Boniface, to that of the Sisters of the Holy Names and the brothers' school at Winnipeg, as well as to the schools of the Grey Nuns at St. Norbert, Ste. Anne, St. Vital, St. François-Xavier, and the school of Madame Mulaire at Ste. Agathe.²

In granting those awards, the London judges were evidently mistaken; for, one who knew Manitoba well, Lord Wolseley, the veracious exponent of social conditions in the Red River valley, avers that the Catholics of that part of Canada were "devoid of education, except such as their priestly teachers thought fit to give them."³ Unless, of course, we imagine that this priestly education bore fruits which commended it to the specialists of the metropolis, though it was not up to the standard of the great man who must be wrongly supposed to be more of a soldier than of a scholar. As poor benighted Taché, "clever wily bishop" though he was,⁴ did not

¹After the translation of *Le Manitoba*, 17th March, 1887.

²Dom Benoît, *Vie de Mgr. Taché*, vol. II., p. 567.

³"The Red River Expedition," p. 202.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 200.

enjoy on those questions the great lights of Wolseley, he contented himself with those unequivocal marks of satisfaction on the part of the specialists of the British capital.

To that same year, 1887, must be referred the beginnings of the splendid hospital building that adorns the right bank of the Red, opposite the mouth of the Assiniboine. The increase in the population had rendered insufficient the building erected in 1877. Protestants, no less than Catholics, appreciated the kindness and devotion to duty of the nuns; therefore, May 15, 1887, the first stone of a large brick edifice was blessed by Father Allard, vicar-general, in the absence of Mgr. Taché. The good sisters were without funds; but Christian charity, solicited by the head of the archdiocese, came to their assistance: money lenders did the rest. On Sunday, October 21, 1888, such of the great pile as was finished was blessed by the archbishop in presence of the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba and representatives of the best society in St. Boniface and Winnipeg.

Then, as the weight of years and the lack of a coadjutor rendered too laborious for the prelate the joint government of the Oblates in Manitoba and the secular clergy, who were becoming more and more numerous in his archdiocese, he obtained from Paris release from his charge of vicar of missions, or provincial superior of his brethren in religion, which Father Camper assumed in June, 1887.

We have already seen Bishop Grandin consulting his metropolitan on the situation of the Church in the Northwest Territories, as he was bound for Ottawa, where he expected to obtain the redress of his grievances. These were mostly based on the interference of the local authorities with affairs beyond their jurisdiction, and their partiality to the sects in the matter of the Indian schools. He had prefaced that voyage by a tour of inspection to some districts of his vast diocese, which had resulted in the selection (July 30, 1887), of a site for a church and missionary residence at Banff, a new hot spring station within the Rocky Mountains.

Then he had gone to Prince Albert, where he had witnessed the educational successes of the Faithful Companions of Jesus, successes which were then causing alarm among the sects, especially the Presbyterians. With pleasure and not a little wonderment he heard a young lady of English parentage and her brother, a boy of ten, recite French pieces with a remarkably pure accent. Both pupils were the children of the former Anglican Bishop of Prince Albert.

The lack of funds and the insufficiency of his personnel had forced Bishop Grandin to close momentarily the Indian mission of Cumberland. But the development of the Church's activity in the Calgary district fully made up for that temporary eclipse. Little towns, like Gleichen, National Park, Anthracite, Pincher Creek, were then springing up on all

sides, which were all the more in need of the priest's services as their Catholic population was not of the most fervent kind.

Calgary proper now enjoyed the good offices of twelve Companions of Jesus (first arrived July 26, 1885), who gave a superior education in English and French. Of the local priests, Fathers Ledue and André, one had usually to visit in rotation the above mentioned (and other) posts, while the Sunday work of the other consisted in the celebration of two masses, one of which had to be sung, with sermons in English, French, and sometimes Cree, Sunday school lessons of one hour's duration and a visit to the prisoners.

And as the population was growing fast, presuming on the assistance of Providence, the priests laid there the foundations of a stone church in the fall of 1887. The sacred edifice was to be in the Roman style, 120 by 50, with transept 70 feet wide, two towers and a fine cupola.

We must now revert to Bishop Grandin's voyage to Ottawa. One of its first results was the sending by the Federal authorities of Rev. Edmond Gendreau, O.M.I., with instructions to enquire on the spot into the objects of the prelate's complaints. This was a token of good-will which was appreciated. Another sign of the general Government's intention to remedy evils and curtail the power of the political personages responsible therefor, was the appointment of Hon. Joseph Royal to the post of Lieuten-

ant-Governor of the Territories. He was sworn in at Regina, July 4, 1888. The new governor then named as one of his three legal experts a Catholic, Hon. Mr. Justice Rouleau, and when he wished to consolidate the ordinances of the previous Northwest Council, Mr. Amédée E. Forget, another Catholic, who had been clerk to that council, and was soon to become Deputy Commissioner of the Indian Department, was one of the two gentlemen to which the task was entrusted.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Royal".

GOVERNOR ROYAL'S SIGNATURE.

Mr. Royal was himself a man of great merit. A writer of note in his mother tongue, French, he had long devoted his energies to the cause of journalism, after which he occupied several positions of trust in the Government of Manitoba. He was the author of the constitution of the Provincial University, of which he became the first vice-chancellor. To him was also due the first school legislation, which gave such satisfaction, and he was appointed the first Superintendent of Education for Manitoba. In 1885 Lord Lansdowne, Governor-General of Canada, awarded him a Confederation medal for services rendered to the cause of the Dominion.

"God is glorified in the assembly of the saints," says the Psalmist.⁵ Hence, as the main object of

⁵Ps. lxxxviii. 8.

His Church on earth is the procuring of His glory through the salvation of souls, she has often recourse, as a corporate body or in her component parts, to the gathering of her chief pastors, meeting "in the unity of faith" to deliberate on the measures necessary to the common good, such as may be prompted by the revolution of time. In doing so she feels sure of the Divine blessing, since her Founder Himself has declared that "where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

The ecclesiastical province of St. Boniface had now been erected for well-nigh a score of years; times were threatening, the religious horizon being overcast with clouds that bode no good. Moreover, the field of the Western Church had now acquired proportions, and her operations an importance, which required mutual consultation between her directing minds, to stifle abuses before they became serious and provide for unity of action. Hence, on Passion Sunday, April 7, 1889, Archbishop Taché summoned the first Provincial Council of St. Boniface by letters addressed to Mgr. Grandin, Bishop of St. Albert; Mgr. Faraud, Vicar-Apostolic of Athabasca-Mackenzie; Mgr. Clut, his coadjutor; Mgr. D'Herbomez, Vicar-Apostolic of British Columbia, and Mgr. Durieu, his auxiliary.

Furthermore, under date May 30th of the same

*Ephes. iv. 13.

*Matt. xvii. 20.

year, the metropolitan convoked his own priests to a general retreat which was to be simultaneous with the sessions of the council. His clergy was now composed of 23 Oblate fathers, 8 Jesuits and 29 secular priests; in all, 60 priests. The opening of the council was fixed for the following 16th of July, being the 71st anniversary of the arrival at Red River of Messrs. Provencher and Dumoulin.

Bishop D'Herbomez being seriously ill, had commissioned Father Cél. Augier, Oblate Provincial of Canada, to take his place in the august assembly. Rev. Messrs. Cherrier and Cloutier were named general secretaries of the council; Messrs. Bitshe and Dabaudès, notaries; Messrs. Messier and Gillis, masters of ceremonies; and Fathers Allard and Lacombe, promoters.

The labours of the council lasted nine days, in the course of which official letters were addressed to the Pope, the General of the Oblates, the Governor-General of Canada, and other personalities or corporate bodies, such as the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian Pacific Railway directors, who were thanked for favours extended to the missionaries. July 18th, a solemn requiem was celebrated by Bishop Faraud for the repose of the soul of Bishop Provencher, whose life and labours were vividly retraced by Father Augier.

As a result of the deliberations of the venerable assembly, it was decided to ask for the erection of the Vicariate-Apostolic of British Columbia into a

regular diocese, and for the division of the diocese of St. Albert, whereby the territory east of the 169th degree of longitude should become a separate vicariate-apostolic. The advisability of having a representative of the western missions at Ottawa was also officially recognized, and the General of the Oblates asked to provide one. A number of regulations were moreover adopted concerning pastors and flocks.

July 24th, the council was closed by a solemn high mass celebrated by Bishop Durieu, and the promulgation of eight decrees bearing respectively on the sacraments, the education of youth, the Indian missions, the sanctification of the Lord's Day; episcopal jurisdiction; ecclesiastical properties, secret societies and Christian mortification.

It is related of the first Christians that, on the first signs of a forthcoming persecution, they sought strength and courage in the assistance at pious assemblies wherein the affairs of the local Church were set in order, and the faithful encouraged one another to constancy in the faith. The Catholics of Western Canada, through their respective pastors, had walked in the footsteps of their elders by holding the First Council of St. Boniface. They were now prepared to face the struggle which they foresaw they would have to undergo with the successors of the very Ontarian sectaries who professed such loud astonishment at the resistance of the Catholics to their aggression in 1869. The latter were now the

majority, and the programme whose realization had been put off twenty years by the intervention of Louis Riel and his halfbreeds was now again on the *tapis*.

Before we come to the persecution of 1890 and following years, let us pay a brief visit to the missions of the Far Northwest, where the malice of civilized man cannot as yet reach. At Lac la Biche, a mission which is now reverting to its original possessor, Bishop Grandin, we will see in July, 1888, Father Grouard packing up his printing plant for the Nativity Mission, where he finds Father Pascal in charge. That locality is destined to become his headquarters, after his sojourn at Lac la Biche and his missions on the Peace River.

To the south of Lake Athabasca another missionary leaves, in 1889, with ponderous tomes of manuscript. It is Father Legoff, who sets out for Canada, where he publishes six portly volumes, mostly in Chippewayan, "a gigantic production," declares a Canadian newspaper. Among the Blackfeet Confederation we find that Father Legal has left St. Paul for the Piegans to establish a new mission among the Blood Indians, leaving his former post to the care of Father Donat Foisy. In the Cumberland district Father Bonnald struggles with success against indifference and Protestantism.

Father Grouard has scarcely had time to settle down in his new post, when he is commissioned by Bishop Faraud to visit in his name the missions of

the Mackenzie. He leaves July 3, 1889, and, wonder of wonders, he covers part of the distance in a steamer lately built by the Hudson's Bay Company. On the 13th of the same month, he is already at Fort Simpson, where he finds Father de Kérangé at the head of the Catholic establishment.

Three days later, he reaches Fort Norman, where, in common with Father Ducot, he deplores the defections which Protestant liberality and a more indulgent moral system at times occasion in the Catholic ranks. On the morrow, Grouard hails Good Hope and with it two veterans, Fathers Séguin and Bro. Kearney, together with a new recruit, Father Giroux. Then he admires the church of Our Lady, which he styles "a little wooden jewel." All the Indians of the place are Catholics.*

On the 31st, the visitor is at Providence, where he enjoys Father Lecorre's hospitality, and meets also Father Roure, who has come from Fort Rae to see him. The Providence establishment, with its convent of seven Grey Nuns, *plus* four Franciscan Sisters lately arrived in the country, and its orphanage sheltering forty-five children of all tribes and languages, is a great credit to the Catholics of the north; but who can tell the cares and anxieties its maintenance entails!

In the following spring (1890), Father Grouard opened a mission for the Eskimos who frequent Peel River. He was aided by Father Lecomte, and the

*See Appendix F.



TRADING WITH THE ESKIMOS, PEEL'S RIVER



two missionaries were somewhat gratified by the results of their ministry. The priest destined for the new establishment was Father Lefebvre, who accompanied Father Grouard in a second trip down the giant stream of the north, together with Father Séguin and some of his Loucheux, whose faith and piety the visitor could not sufficiently admire.

The beginnings among the notorious pilferers of the Arctic were hard, and the priests had to beware. Yet even the hurried visits formerly paid them by Fathers Séguin and Petitot had taught them to respect the Catholic missionary. "The minister is a man like ourselves," they declared; "but the priests are the children of the sun."

Side by side with the anticipations of ultimate results which buoyed up the founder of the new mission, we must mention the terrible famine which desolated the northern wastes in the spring of 1889. Everywhere natives fell, mowed down by the grim Reaper, and, occasionally, old people had to be abandoned to their fate by relatives who felt impelled to go on in the vain hope of finding some means of subsistence. When Grouard reached Fort Wriggley, the commander of his post and his man had been reduced to the necessity of eating part of their furs, and they were then living on roots.

More melancholy still was the fate of a whole Indian family of Fort Providence, who had taken to

Missions des Oblats, vol. XXVIII, p. 448.

the woods in search of something to eat. This is how Father Giroux tells of their distress:

"We learned that a hunter was 'fasting' [i.e., famishing] at Lake Auray. Unfortunately we could do nothing for him. At the fort everybody had also been fasting for a long time, and the mission was nearing the end of its resources. In the course of April, the poor Indian succumbed, and his wife stationed herself with her children by the side of a trail, hoping that some dog-train would pass by and assist her. Poor mother! how long the days must have seemed to her when she beheld her children tortured by hunger without a piece of meat or fish to give them!

"Her two boys died first: this is inferred from the sepulture which her motherly hands prepared for them under the snow, just out of the tepee. Her two older daughters next succumbed, for the mother then lacked the necessary strength to take out their bodies and bury them. She must then have taken into her arms her little girl, a babe a few months old, and, pressing her to her breast, she probably attempted to sustain the spark of life in her. But, vain hope: the fountain of life was dried up. However, the poor frail creature must have survived the whole family; for, from her position when found, it was evident that she had struggled to free herself from the cold arms of her mother."¹⁰


If now, turning from those gruesome scenes, we

¹⁰*Missions*, vol. XXVIII., p. 453.

return to the south of the ecclesiastical province, our heart will be gladdened by very different events. In his zeal for colonization and Church progress, the metropolitan was just erecting new parishes within the territory immediately under his sway. These were Fannystelle, La Salle or St. Hyacinthe and Grande Clairière. The first was a French foundation due to the generosity of the Countess of Albufera. That noble lady had bought a large tract of land, on which a church, with a priest's residence and a school house, were built, between Starbuck and Ilets de Bois. Little by little settlers, mostly from old France, established their homes thereon, and in the fall of 1890 the colony received a resident priest in the person of Rev. Mr. Perquis.¹¹

The second foundation was that of the La Salle parish, dedicated to St. Hyacinth in honour of the college of the same name with which were connected the ecclesiastics (Messrs. Beaudry and Dumesnil) who chiefly concurred in its establishment. It was canonically erected by Mgr. Taché, August 16, 1890, and Mr. Beaudry was its first resident pastor. A priest from France, Mr. Jean Gaire, was the founder of the third parish. In July, 1888, the intrepid colonizer pitched his tent twenty miles south of the railway station nearest to Oak Lake, and built a chapel which became the nucleus of Grande Clairière, the name given to the new settlement.

¹¹The poetic name of the settlement was of the Countess' own composition. It means Fanny's Star, and was given in memory of a dear friend of its noble patroness.



CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MANITOBA SCHOOL QUESTION.

1888-1895.

And now, with regret and repugnance, we must take up the subject of the great wrong perpetrated in 1890, an injustice and the beginning of a legal persecution which were to darken the last years of Mgr. Taché's life, and probably hasten its termination. One feels so loath to record instances of man's duplicity, crookedness and abuse of power! A Catholic might, indeed, find some sort of consolation in the thought that such intolerance and glaring injustice must be credited to a set of people who never tire of laying their own sins at the doors of his Church. But the comparison of the generous treatment accorded the Protestant minority of Quebec by its Catholic majority with the flagrant intolerance of the Protestant majority towards the Catholic minority of Manitoba yields little enough satisfaction to, for instance, the poor taxpayer who has meanwhile to provide with his hard-earned money for the education of the Protestant child, of no concern to him, and then for that of his own offspring.

As we have more than once seen in the course of the present work, the cause of education had ever been paramount in the counsels of the Church in the

Middle West. In this her authorities had been powerfully aided by the secular rulers of the land. One of the most significant of the first missionaries' instructions had been the following: "The missionaries shall take a special care of Christian education among the youth, and for this they shall establish schools and catechism courses in the localities which they may have occasion to visit." The same directions provided explicitly for the establishment, near Fort Douglas, of "a church, a house, and a school." We have seen these orders scrupulously executed wherever the priests penetrated.

It was likewise specified by the great Bishop Plessis, the author of these instructions, that these objects should be furthered by using to the best possible advantage the land which the founder of the colony was to give the Red River mission. Then, under date May 9, 1818, Lord Selkirk had explicitly approved of these arrangements,¹ thereby himself contributing to the support of the Church schools.

The Hudson's Bay Company which, some time after the noble founder's death, became the representative of the Crown directly or, later, through the Council of Assiniboia, followed in the footsteps of Lord Selkirk, aiding the Catholic, as well as the Protestant, schools by grants of land, free passages of teachers on their boats and subsidies in money,

¹"Mr. Provencher has shown me the instructions and documents given to him; they seem to contain all that could be desired" (From a letter to Bishop Plessis).

which were known to be applied to a great extent towards the furtherance of Catholic education.

For over fifty years all the schools of the colony were denominational. On the other hand, as no regular taxes were levied for their support, it stands to reason that all the monies contributed towards Catholic and Protestant institutions (£100 yearly to the former, and still more to the latter) must have been meant to help on the schools no less than the churches of the two great religious bodies.

Furthermore, when, in the midst of the 1869 insurrection, the Canadian Government wished to set at ease the Catholics of Assiniboia, who thought themselves menaced in their religious and civil rights, and prepare them for the acceptance of the Canadian jurisdiction, the Secretary of State wrote them through Bishop Taché that the Government "would deeply regret if the civil and religious liberty of the whole population were not adequately protected."²

But everybody knows that, in the eyes of the Catholic Church, the child being the father of the man, his education must of all necessity be on a religious basis, and the State's only right in the matter is to see that he does not get an education that might ulteriorly prove detrimental to the welfare of society. There is no use in controverting these principles, which Protestants are free to reject as far as they are personally concerned: they constitute the Church's position on education, and for a

²Sir Jos. Howe, 16th Feb., 1870.

non-Catholic to prevent their realization among Catholics is tantamount to waging war on their Church, that is, falling into an open act of persecution.

Lastly, the Bill of Rights that represented the conditions on which the people of Assiniboia consented to be annexed to Canada—and into which they could *not* be coerced, as was recognized by the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies³—contained as one of its clauses a demand for separate schools.⁴ In answer to this the Manitoba Act, which became the fundamental Constitution of that province, expressly stipulated that “the said legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to education, subject and according to the following provisions:—Nothing in any such laws shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to denominational schools which any class of persons have by law or *practice* in the province at the union.”

Article 16 of the Bill of Rights similarly asked for the use of both English and French in the legis-

“Troops should not be employed in forcing the sovereignty of Canada on the population of the Red River” (Sir F. Rogers, 22nd March, 1870).

“It has been claimed by some that separate schools were not specifically mentioned in the Bill of Rights such as drafted at Fort Garry; but, as the Protestant historian Begg very aptly remarks, that document “called for the respecting of all rights and privileges, and if he [Mr. Ritchot], by instruction or of his own accord, chose to particularize that of separate schools, he can hardly be said to have exceeded his powers” (“Hist. of the N.W.,” vol. III, p. 397). But we have it from a most honourable party, who was a particular friend of L. Biel and knew Mr. Ritchot intimately, that the latter did not alter in any way the wording of the Bill of Rights, which was probably given its final and official form by the Provisional Government as representatives of the people.

lature and courts. This request was met by Clause XXIII. of the Manitoban Constitution, which reads as follows: "Either the English or the French languages may be used by any person in the debates by the houses of the legislature, and both these languages shall be used in the respective records and journals of those houses, and either of those languages may be used by any person, or in any pleading or process, or in issuing from any Court of Canada established under the British North America Act, 1867, or in or from all or any of the courts of the province. The acts of the legislature shall be printed and published in both those languages."

This double right, to separate schools and the official use of the French language, seemed therefore guaranteed by as solemn and explicit a compact as men could possibly devise. We shall presently see how the would-be representatives of tolerance and religious liberty treated it.⁵

The Hon. Mr. John Norquay, an able Scotch half-breed who had for many years held the helm of the Manitoban Government with success and perfect honesty, had been succeeded in his post of Premier by Dr. D. H. Harrison, a Conservative like himself (December 26, 1887). But such was the public excitement over some railway matters, that it was felt the new administration could not live unless sus-

⁵As early as 1879 a bill had passed the legislature, abolishing the printing in French of all the official documents except the statutes; but this was considered so plainly unconstitutional that it was never assented to by the governor.

tained in the St. François-Xavier electoral district, where Hon. Jos. Burke, the Provincial Secretary, presented himself for election.

The constituency was largely French and Catholic, and, in spite of his name, Mr. Burke was of that nationality and denomination, while his Liberal opponent was an English Protestant. The contest was therefore quite unequal, considering especially that it was suspected and broadly hinted that the Liberals stood for the abolition of French as an official language and even of the Catholic schools. A man from Ontario, Joseph Martin, since known as the stormy petrel of Canadian politics, whose word cannot be depended on,^a was the right arm of Thomas Greenway, the leader of the opposition. Knowing that "strong efforts were made by the Government to induce the electors to believe that the Liberals were the natural enemies of the French and the Catholics, Mr. Joseph Martin and other Liberals with great earnestness repelled the charge, asserted that they were entirely in sympathy with the French Catholics, and distinctly promised that their language and institutions should be conserved."⁷

By means of this promise the Liberals carried the election, January 12, 1888, and four days later Mr.

^aTo cite but the latest instance of his ways, he left British Columbia, declaring his irrevocable abandonment of politics, and his first move in reaching England was to present himself as candidate at Stratford-on-Avon.

⁷J. S. Ewart, Open Letter to Hon. Mr. Greenway ("The Manitoba School Question," p. 220. Toronto, 1894).

Greenway was sent for to form the first Liberal administration of Manitoba. What then happened we shall relate in the very words^s used by Mr. John S. Ewart, a Protestant Liberal, in an open letter to the same Mr. Greenway:

"To assist him in this work he [Greenway] personally called upon His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface. He found him too ill to meet him. At his [the archbishop's] request he made his communication through Vicar-General Allard. He proceeded to assure the archbishop that he was in entire sympathy with him upon the two questions of Catholic schools and French language; that it would be the policy of his Government to maintain them inviolate, and he requested that His Grace would name someone who would be acceptable to his people as a member of the Cabinet. The Vicar-General listened to his promises and request, and agreed to meet him in Winnipeg at nine o'clock the next morning. He did so meet him, then told him that His Grace was extremely gratified with his protestations of good will; that he believed that Mr. Prendergast had the confidence of his people, and that inasmuch as politics, apart from defence of his flock, were outside his sphere, no opposition would be made to the Government as far as he was concerned. He [Greenway] gave the same assurances to the Liberal French members of the House; and he was thus enabled to

"With only such changes as "you" into "him" or "he."

meet the general election with Mr. Prendergast as a colleague in his Cabinet, and several French Catholic candidates in his ranks. After the election he had as supporters five out of the six members."⁹

The eminent lawyer closes his open letter by this emphatic declaration: "These pledges have all been broken; and power obtained with the assistance of Roman Catholics has been prostituted to their overthrow."

The Greenway Government commenced its campaign of persecution by an act of spoliation. In conformity with a clause of the school law which provided that "each section of the board [of education] may reserve for unforeseen contingencies a sum not exceeding ten per cent. of its share of appropriation,"¹⁰ the Catholic section of the same had amassed, by strict economy and even personal sacrifices on the part of its members and others, a reserve fund of \$13,879.47. On July 12, 1889, the Greenway Government demanded that sum of Mr. Thos. A. Bernier, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, remarking at the same time that "this demand refers only to a detail of internal administration, and in no way to the property of the amount indicated; the amount is decidedly a vested right and will not admit of a doubt at any time."¹¹

On the strength of that explanation, that fund was

⁹*Ubi supra*, pp. 220, 221.

¹⁰Archbishop Taché, "A Page of the History of the Schools in Manitoba," p. 31.

¹¹*Ibid.*, *ibid.*

handed in ten days later. But, instead of being credited to the department to which it belonged, or at least employed for an object cognate to that for which it had been amassed, the Provincial Treasurer counted it as one of the savings made by the administration.

The following month (August, 1889), a firebrand was sent west by the lodges in the person of Mr. D'Alton McCarthy, to inflame the popular passions against the Catholic schools, and pave the way towards the abolition of the same. McCarthy was tendered a reception by the Orangemen of Portage la Prairie. He then addressed a meeting, denouncing the separate school system and the use of French in the legislature and the courts. He further urged his hearers to unite in demanding the abolition of both anomalies, as he termed them.

Joseph Martin was present at the meeting. His most elementary duty was, of course, to protest against such proposals, since he owed the triumph of his party to the promise he had made to defend those very rights of the Catholic minority which were now assailed. But Martin emphatically endorsed the views of the speaker on both questions, though he acknowledged that "the Constitution may be against us."¹² That meeting was the signal for a violent agitation, which was kept up throughout the province by the representatives of the Liberal Government or its emissaries.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 32.

Greenway seems at first to have been reluctant to make light of his word spontaneously given to the head of the Church in the west. But the fear of forfeiting his position to Joseph Martin, his able but unscrupulous Attorney-General, gradually drew him into the vortex of the agitation, and he insensibly yielded.

His government at first gave it out that the dual system of education was to be replaced by a single department, under a minister who would be responsible to the people for the administration of the school monies. August 29, 1889, a convention of the Protestant board of education adopted resolutions deprecating the secularization of the schools, and advocating the continuation of a board with two sections. Then, as a protest against the new policy of the Government, Hon. J. E. Prendergast, Provincial Secretary, handed in his resignation, which was accepted in the first days of September.

Next, of its own authority, the Government ceased to publish a French version of the *Official Gazette*.

Meanwhile, a large number of petitions were being signed against the abolition of the separate schools and of French as an official language, which were presented to the House when it met January 30, 1890. Mr. Prendergast then moved a resolution condemning the Government for having stopped the publication of the French version of the *Gazette*. Though based on a most explicit text of the Constitution, this was defeated, all the English-speaking members voting against it.

Thereupon followed a long and most bitter struggle for the retention of the separate schools, in the course of which the six French members fought step by step the proposed establishment of a secular school system. One day one of them spoke for nine consecutive hours and a half; another, Mr. Prendergast, "made an admirable speech which won the applause of both friends and opponents."¹⁸ Nevertheless, the new legislation abolishing what had prevailed ever since the inception of Lord Selkirk's colony, was finally passed March 19, 1890, by a vote of 25 to 11. Among the members who stood for the rights of the minority we may mention the late Mr. J. Norquay and Mr. R. P. Roblin.

This School Act provided for the creation of a Department of Education and the abolition of the Protestant and Catholic boards; it decreed the confiscation on behalf of the new school districts of the monies belonging to the Catholic schools, and forbade the giving during school hours of any religious instruction and the holding of any other exercises than those approved of by an advisory board, which was, of course, to be composed mostly of Protestants and to prescribe what suited Protestants.

Commenting on this vandalism, Protestant Begg cannot help asking: "Is a promise once given now to be broken? Is the mandate of the Imperial Government to respect the rights and privileges of

¹⁸Alexander Begg, "History of the North-West," vol. III., p. 335.

the people at the time of union to be now set at naught?"

As a clear evidence that the Manitoban Government suspected they were throwing the Constitution to the winds we may note that, in the course of the debate on the abolition of denominational schools, they had inserted in the estimates an item for \$1,000 destined to "constitutional litigation."

It seems in a way providential that such iniquitous spoliation was accomplished at a time when he who had been Riel's foremost antagonist in 1870, John Schultz, was Lieutenant-Governor of the province. The real aims of the so-called Canadian party before annexation to the Dominion became more clearly apparent by the fact that they were realized under the reign of its former leader—a further confirmation of the opportuneness of the stand taken by the halfbreeds in 1869 and a new vindication of Riel's course. The Lieutenant-Governor was requested to disavow the new legislation; but he would not entertain the proposal.

Three days later, a bill abolishing the use of French in the legislature and the courts passed the House by the same Liberal (!) majority. Then, as if anxious to show that the animus of the majority was really against the Catholic Church, they further decreed the suppression as legal holidays of four among the six Catholic feasts of obligation, which had so far been recognized by the State in Manitoba, as in other provinces of Canada. The two retained,

Christmas and Circumcision, were already observed by the Protestants throughout the province; hence they were not done away with.

The serious inconveniences arising from the suppression of the other holidays, coupled with the new school laws, are thus described by Archbishop Taché: "Supposing it is Epiphany or Ascension Day; the church bell will ring for the Divine office while the school bell will ring for the class; what will the Catholic teachers and pupils do? If they go to church, they will miss class and will be liable to incur the inconvenience of that infraction of school regulations. If they go to school they must have well-grounded scruples of conscience as they violate a very positive law of their religion, and by so doing fail in an important obligation. This signifies perhaps nothing for our separated brethren, who may say: 'the school above all.' But this signifies a great deal for the conscience of the Catholic who answers: 'religion above all,' and 'it is better to obey God than man.'"¹⁴

It need scarcely be said that these persecuting measures deeply affected the metropolitan of St. Boniface. He had worked like a slave by means of letters to the press and other writings to ward off the blow that was impending, going so far as to beg in person for the life of his dear schools of a politician who had two years before spontaneously promised that they would be religiously preserved.

¹⁴ "A Page of the History of the Catholic Schools," p. 38.

Greenway was then accompanied by two of his fellow ministers; hence, to keep inviolate the secrecy asked of him, the archbishop forbore to mention the explicit promise made him through his vicar-general, that he might spare him the confusion that would have arisen in case he had revealed it before his two companions. We shall presently see how the politician was to reward him for that considerate generosity.

In the meantime, overwhelmed with sorrow and overwork, the prelate fell seriously ill, early in 1890. On the first of May of that year, he was writing to Rt. Rev. Father Fabre, O.M.I., that it was eighteen days since he had been able to stand up to celebrate even a low mass. Later on he grew worse, and it seemed for a time as if the same blow that did away with the Catholic schools in Manitoba was to kill him also who had practically been their founder and remained their chief protector.

His devotion to the cause of Christian education was so well known that the persecutors freely hinted that he and his clergy were alone in the struggle for their preservation. The principal laymen of St. Boniface, St. Norbert, St. Jean-Baptiste, St. Pierre, Ste. Anne and other parishes, therefore, thought it their duty to show the unanimity of the Catholic body in their revendications. They celebrated with unusual pomp the national feast of the French Canadians (June 24th), after which they held a congress the outcome of which was an emphatic declaration

of assent to the steps taken by their representatives in the House to protect their schools and language from the new vandals. They resolved that, if necessary, they would even burden themselves with a double tax "in order to keep up schools wherein their religious convictions should be respected."

The laity had spoken. It was not until three months later that the head of people and clergy sent out his authoritative protest against the spoliation of the rights secured by the Constitution. This he did by means of a mandement wherein he lay down with a masterly hand the Catholic principles on education and outlined the duties of his flock under the circumstances.

But the laity had not waited for these instructions to act. In the course of August, 1890, a petition asking for redress was sent to the Governor-General of Canada, which, in addition to some prominent names from the ranks of the clergy, contained the signatures of Messrs. T. A. Bernier, J. Dubuc, L. A. Prud'homme, M. A. Girard, A. A. Larivière, M.P., James E. Prendergast, M.P.P., Roger Marion, M.P. P., and 4,257 others.

Then, to test the validity of the laws of spoliation from a legal standpoint, an application was made to a local court by Mr. John K. Barrett, a ratepayer of Winnipeg, with a view to have quashed two by-laws made by that city to raise funds for school purposes. Mr. Justice Killam dismissed the same on the plea that the new Acts on which the by-laws were based



HON. JOSEPH DUBUC
Chief Justice of Manitoba



did not create a system of denominational schools, and because they did not compel any class of citizens to support other denominational schools than their own.

On appeal, Chief Justice Taylor and Justice Bain sustained that judgment, while Justice Dubuc (who had succeeded Justice Bétournay on the Bench, November 13, 1879), dissented. The case was then taken to the Supreme Court of Canada, whose members unanimously declared that the school laws of Manitoba were *ultra vires*, and therefore null and void.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "J. Dubuc". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

CHIEF JUSTICE DUBUC'S SIGNATURE.

Thereupon, proceedings similar to those of the Barrett case were instituted, supposedly by a Mr. Alex. Logan, an Episcopalian, who complained of the public schools with the approval of the Anglican Bishop of Rupert's Land,¹⁵ but in reality at the instigation of the enemies of Catholic education, who hoped thereby to embarrass the minority by a practical demonstration of the confusion its pretention would lead to if every denomination were granted schools according to its own tenets. But the political tricksters forgot the all-essential point that all

¹⁵Who, however, disavowed all participation in that case when he realized the aim of the politicians who had inspired it.

the sects, including the Church of England, had always formed a single section in contradistinction to the Catholic board of education, and that they could not logically claim more than was secured to them by the Constitution.

Be this as it may, the Court of the Queen's Bench held itself bound in this case by the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada concerning the Catholic revendications, and sided with Logan.

Thenceforth the endless controversies which had agitated the press became more and more acrimonious, and the Hon. Thomas Greenway so far forgot himself as to deny that he had made any promises to His Grace of St. Boniface. Therefore, the latter's vicar-general, Very Rev. Father Allard, declared publicly that said Th. Greenway had indeed called on the archbishop in the company of Mr. W. F. Alloway, banker, and that he, Father Allard, had received for the sick prelate Greenway's spontaneous and explicit promise to the effect that, 1st, the Catholic schools would not be meddled with; 2nd, the official use of the French language would be retained, and, 3rd, the French electoral divisions would not be altered. The same day Mr. Alloway confirmed it by a similar document on his oath, wherein he asserted that he "was present at the whole of the said interview and heard all that transpired between the vicar-general and said Thos. Greenway," and furthermore that "the account of

said interview as set out in said declaration of the Vicar-General is true in substance and in fact."

Meantime, the City of Winnipeg had taken up the case to the Imperial Privy Council, which annulled the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, in so far as the London tribunal decided that the Manitoba school legislation was *intra vires*. The noble lords based their judgment on the grounds that "Roman Catholics and members of every other religious body in Manitoba are free to establish schools throughout the province; they are free to maintain their schools according to their own religious tenets without molestation or interference."

To which we cannot help adding that if they were only free to refuse to pay double taxes, that is, for the public or Protestant schools as well as for their own, the whole difficulty would be eliminated.

On September 20, 1892, Mr. Bernier and the other members of the executive committee of the National Congress, to which we have already referred, addressed a petition to the Governor-General in Council, submitting that the time had come for His Excellency to consider the petitions sent by the Catholics of Manitoba for the redress of their grievances under subsections 2 and 3 of section XXII. of the Manitoba Act. These declare in substance that an appeal shall lie to the Governor-in-Council from any Act of the Provincial Legislature affecting any right or privilege of the Roman Catholic minority, and that in case no redress is afforded by said legis-

lature, the Parliament of Canada may make remedial laws therefor.

Analogous documents were signed two days later by Archbishop Taché, and, in the course of November, by himself, the president of the National Committee, the reeve of St. Boniface and 138 others, as well as by Mr. J. S. Ewart, counsel for the Catholic minority in Manitoba.

Before acting in the matter, the Federal Government submitted the case to the Supreme Court of Canada who, deeming themselves bound by the decision of the Privy Council, decided adversely to the claims of the Catholic minority. The case having been taken up to London and entrusted to the Hon. Edward Blake, the Privy Council now declared that the Catholics had indeed a real grievance, for which they were entitled to redress at the hands of the Parliament of Canada.)

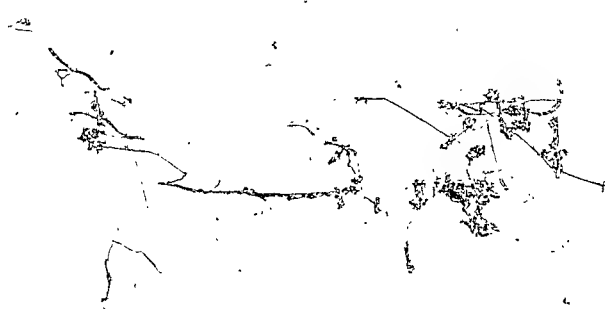
"Contrast," said the metropolitan judges, "the position of the Roman Catholics prior and subsequent to the Acts from which they appeal. Before these passed into law there existed denominational schools, of which the control and management were in the hands of Roman Catholics, who could select the books to be used and determine the character of the religious teaching. These schools received their proportionate shares of the money contributed for school purposes out of the general taxation of the province, and the money raised for these purposes by local assessments was, so far as it fell upon Cath-

olies, applied only towards the support of Catholic schools. What is the position of the Catholic minority under the Acts of 1890? They must depend entirely for their support upon the contributions of the Roman Catholic community, while the taxes out of which State aid is granted to the schools provided for by the Statute fall alike on Catholics and Protestants. Moreover, while the Catholic inhabitants remain liable to local assessment for school purposes, the proceeds of that assessment are no longer destined to any extent for the support of Catholic schools, but afford the means of maintaining schools which they regard as no more suitable for the education of Catholic children than if they were distinctly Protestant in their character."

This all-important judgment was delivered on the 29th of January, 1895. The Catholic minority lost no time in following out the course which it left open to them. Application was made for remedial legislation by the Federal Parliament.¹⁸ The Conservative Government then presented for adoption a bill which was defeated, after deliberate obstruction, by the opposition under Mr. Wilfrid Laurier,

¹⁸To any fair mind the case was so clear that, when it came up in the Canadian Parliament, even Mr. Wm. McDougall, the would-be Manitoba Governor of 1869, could not help taking the defence of the people who had repulsed him. McDougall had been present, in 1870, at the passing of the Manitoba Act, on which the minority now based their claims to separate schools; hence he could speak authoritatively of the real intentions of the framers of that Act. He honoured himself by bearing testimony to their incontestable determination to grant the same, in answer to Clause VII. of the Bill of Rights, such as presented to the Federal authorities.

who claimed that it was not practical and promised to settle himself the question to the satisfaction of all. When, however, that brilliant politician had become Premier of Canada, he effected nothing but a sort of compromise which fell quite short of the Catholic aspirations, and was subsequently declared inadequate by the Pope.



CHAPTER XXXV.

NEW BISHOPS IN NEW AND OLD PLACES.

1890-1892.

This persecution of the Church in the Middle West was by no means restricted to Manitoba. We have already mentioned the difficulties constantly raised in the Northwest Territories by officials acting under the pressure of sectarian animosities. Emboldened by the audacity of the Manitoba politicians, they renewed their annoyances, which had been somewhat stopped by the complaints of Bishop Grandin. This necessitated another voyage (August, 1890) to the Canadian capital for the prelate, who had then interviews with several of the Crown ministers. He had prepared an elaborate memoir setting forth the grievances of the Catholics in the Northwest Territories, which it was his intention to publish. The promises of the Federal Government made him abandon that idea.

The great name of the metropolitan and the influence he enjoyed at Ottawa, an influence which had occasioned several excellent nominations to western offices depending directly from the central Government, rendered practically impossible similar vexations within his archdiocese. Under the immediate direction of Father Hugonard, the Indian school of

Qu'Appelle was pursuing its routine work to the satisfaction of everybody, while Father Prisque Magnan presided over the labours of the missionaries stationed at the mission of the same name. Over five thousand Catholics, of whom 3,750 were Indians, had to be attended to, who were divided into no less than seven nationalities, viz., French, English, Hungarians, Crees, Sauteux, Sioux and Assiniboines.

The Sioux, as we have seen, were immigrants to Canada. Under the guidance of Father Decorbé, they were making fairly good progress in the path of Christian morality, while others were not so amenable to the ways of religion and civilization. At times, however, events of a startling nature combined with the missionary's exhortations to give weight to his words. For instance, a medicine-man—the priest of the devil among the natives—had started his incantations to conjure off a thunderstorm by mimicking some of the Catholic ceremonies. He was struck down by lightning with three or four of his assistants, a circumstance which was regarded by all as an intervention of the Divine wrath and a condign punishment for the sacrilegious performance.

The success of the Qu'Appelle Industrial School for Indians encouraged Archbishop Taché to establish, with the concurrence of the Ottawa Government, a similar institution at his very door. A few native girls were at first gathered at the provincial

house of the St. Boniface Grey Nuns, while a brick house was being built for the same object to the east of the same. This was blessed December 28, 1890, by the prelate himself; it received in the course of the following year Indian boys and girls in separate quarters. These were at first under the immediate direction of the sisters, who had the management of the institution. A Rev. Mr. Lavigne was their chaplain and attended to the spiritual needs of the children.¹

In the course of the same year, 1890, the sad demise of one of God's anointed cast gloom over the archiepiscopal city. Mgr. Faraud, incapacitated by his growing infirmities, had remained at St. Boniface ever since the council, and had resigned his charge of vicar-apostolic early in 1890. The venerable prelate dwelt in the vicinity of the hospital, in the company of Bro. Boisramé, who waited on him, and, for the last months of his life, of Father Pascal, his former subject, whom circumstances had brought to St. Boniface and who was soon to be sent to France. In spite of the care and attentions lavished on him, Mgr. Faraud sank rapidly, and in the morning of September 26, 1890, he breathed his last after an illness borne with admirable patience.

He was buried under the sanctuary of the cathedral after a solemn service sung by Father Camper in presence of Archbishops Taché and Ireland, the

¹Early in 1896 the establishment was turned over to the Oblates, represented by Rev. Ambroise C. Comeau.

latter of St. Paul. Bishop Grandin's train having been late, that prelate arrived after the ceremony.

This death meant the choice of a new titular for the Vicariate-Apostolic of Athabasca-Mackenzie. It was soon made: Father Emile Grouard, as able a business man as he had been successful in his career of Indian missionary, succeeded Bishop Faraud. He was named Bishop of Ibora, October 18, 1890, and preconised on the following 4th of June. Bishop Taché had himself raised him to the priesthood at Boucherville, May 3, 1862. Despite the precarious state of his health, he could not refuse to give him the unction which makes pontiffs. Bishop Grouard's consecration took place at St. Boniface, August 1, 1891, with Mgr. Grandin, of St. Albert, and Mgr. Shanley, of Fargo, as assistant bishops.

In the same consistory (June 4, 1891), another Oblate was proclaimed bishop, whose appointment betrayed the great strides the Church was making in Western Canada. This promotion resulted from the division of the diocese of St. Albert, which had been accomplished, after lengthy and laborious negotiations with Rome and Paris. Once the former had approved of it, the metropolitan sent (October 21, 1890), the names of the three priests who were deemed most fit for the post of titular of the new vicariate-apostolic to the Superior-General of the Oblates, whom he requested to forward same to the Propaganda in case he concurred in the selection of the candidate.

Meantime the newspapers announced the division of the diocese as an event which had already been consummated, and implied that the name of the nominee for the new See had been sent to Rome. Now the appointment of an Oblate thereto meant immense responsibilities for his Institute. It was therefore but right that the head of the Order should have his word to say in the matter. Rt. Rev. Father Fabre, the Superior-General, felt it so; and, not knowing of Taché's letter, he addressed him one of those spicy communications of which he seemed to have the secret.

Received in the evening of October 30th, its contents banished sleep from the brows of the poor prelate, who got up at midnight and penned a letter of explanation whose humble tone deeply moved the heart of the Oblate General.

Father Fabre was now satisfied that the whole trouble was the outcome of a misunderstanding due to the indiscretion of the public press. Yet, to affirm his authority, he decided that, instead of the father proposed for the episcopate in the archbishop's communication, the name of Father Pascal, then in France, should be submitted to Rome for the position.

In consequence, that missionary was appointed Bishop of Mosynopolis and Vicar-Apostolic of the Saskatchewan, on April 19, 1891, and consecrated June 29th^a of the same year, in the cathedral of

^aNot the 5th, as Dom Benoit has it in the second volume of his valuable *Vie de Mgr. Taché*, p. 635.

Viviers, France, the very place where his metropolitan had himself received the episcopal unction. His territory had for limits: in the north, the Arctic Sea; in the west, the 109th degree of longitude and the Vicariate-Apostolic of Athabasca-Mackenzie; in the south, the civil province of Manitoba and part of Alberta, and in the east, Hudson Bay, Nelson River and the western shore of Lake Winnipeg as far as the boundaries of Manitoba.

The new prelate was born at St. Genest de Beauzon, in the department of Ardèche, France, August 3, 1848, and studied at Viviers and Aubenas. We have already seen him arrive in Western Canada in the course of 1870. He made his novitiate at Lachine, near Montreal, pronouncing his final vows September 27, 1873. He was admitted to the priesthood the following first of November. In 1874 he commenced his apostolic ministry, which was to have for its theatre mostly the shores of Athabasca and Great Slave Lakes.

Another event of a consoling character, especially for the sensitive heart of Mgr. Taché, was the visit, in October, 1891, of the Very Rev. Father Martinet, one of the four assistants of the Oblate General. For a number of years the acts and intentions of the archbishop had occasionally been viewed in an unfriendly light at Paris, the seat of the General Administration of the Order. Mgr. Taché was deeply attached to his Institute; he therefore suffer-

ed deep anguish at perceiving that he did not possess the full confidence of its head, and he longed for verbal explanations.

Unfortunately a journey to Paris had become for him a sheer impossibility. Through the kind offices of Father Langevin, the representative of the Oblate General, on an official visit to eastern Canada, was persuaded to push as far as St. Boniface. The result of the meeting of the two great Oblates was a complete vindication of Taché's course and a reversal of feelings on the part of the visitor. The lifting of the clouds of misunderstanding was an immense relief for the former.

The year 1891 had just seen the building of a railway line from Calgary to Edmonton. This was much appreciated by the St. Albert missionaries, who were at length brought within measurable distance of civilization. It also considerably benefited its northern terminus, Edmonton, which, from a Hudson's Bay Company trading post and entrepôt for the north, was soon to become a city, prior to its being selected as the capital of a new province.

The locality had never been neglected by the religious authorities. Even in the balmy days of Ste. Anne's, it had been linked thereto by some sort of spiritual tie, being then placed under the patronage of St. Joachim, the spouse of Mary's mother. In 1881 the Hudson's Bay Company having divided into town lots part of their land round the fort, Father Leduc bought a block, on which a modest

building 30 by 24 was erected, the first floor of which did duty as a chapel, while the priest lodged in the second. This church-house was put up in 1882. From that year, therefore, dates the establishment of a permanent missionary station at Edmonton. However, no priest had resided more than a few months in the new quarters when Father Henri Grandin, a nephew of the Ordinary of the diocese, took charge of the place, October 1, 1883.

In the course of 1891 were also laid the foundations of another centre of population in the Far West. This was Morinville, named after its founder, the Rev. Jean-Baptiste Morin, a French Canadian priest hailing from Montreal. The new locality was situated 22 miles north of Edmonton, and the first settlers of the whole region arrived on the spot in the spring of 1891. So successful was the undertaking that, three years later, Morinville possessed a church which, though not a paragon of architectural beauty, betokened by its dimensions an already large population. To-day it is an industrial, as well as an agricultural, centre.

Not only Morinville, but also Beaumont, Végreville, St. Emile of Legal, and Saint Edmond, or Rivière-qui-Barre, owe their existence to the exertions of Mr. Morin. During ten years that gentleman proved a most successful colonization agent and organizer. Végreville was so called by him after the veteran Oblate of the same name to whom numerous references have been made in the course of

this work. Its first settlers were French Canadians from Kansas. They reached the valley wherein the town now stands on May 2, 1894. On July 14th of the same year the first church service was held there, and in the spring of the following year the new settlement boasted a post-office.

Végreville is on the Canadian Northern Railway, east of Edmonton. On the line of the C. P. R. we first find Lacombe and Leduc, whose names stand out on the map of Alberta as silent witnesses to the consideration the Church's ministers enjoyed in the Far West when the Calgary-Edmonton line was built. Some time in 1890, Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney established, twenty miles south of Edmonton, a telegraph station to which he gave the name of Vicar-General Leduc, O.M.I. With the advent of the railway, this developed into an important town, which possesses a Catholic church.

More important still is Lacombe, which owes its origin and name to the C. P. R. authorities.* The stations with aboriginal vocables on the same line were, in a sense, christened by Father Lacombe, though, as a matter of fact, the application of the same was the result of an accident. The veteran missionary had been asked by the railway officials to furnish a list of the Indian names applied to a number of points where the establishment of sta-

*While Morinville and Végreville have long had resident priests, Lacombe and Leduc have only modest churches attended once a month from Wetaskiwin, the greater part of their population being Protestant.

tions was contemplated. He complied with the request; but, by a strange oversight, the order in which the native terms had been written was reversed, those intended for the northern end of the line being made to designate points in the south, and *vice versâ*.

All those foundations were within Grandin's domains. Additions to the already existing parishes within the territory of the metropolitan were just then (1891) being made, while a new religious Order was introduced in the west. On May 14, 1891, Dom Paul Benoît, a Regular Canon of the Immaculate Conception, accompanied by three of his brethren, as well as a first contingent of French and Swiss settlers, was commencing the establishment, in the Pembina mountain, to the north of St. Léon, of a parish which was put under the patronage of Our Lady of Lourdes. The following year, other colonists made their way to some seventeen miles in the northeast, near the Rivière des Iles de Bois of the French halfbreeds. The new settlement received the name of St. Claude, and was regularly visited by the religious of Notre-Dame de Lourdes.

In 1892 a priest was appointed from St. Boniface to a third centre of recent foundation. Belgians, and others from Europe, as well as some French Canadians, had established their homes in the vicinity of St. Alphonse. They were constituted into a distinct parish, which was called Bruxelles, and Rev. Mr. Willems named to watch over their religious

interests. His temporary lodgings, which also served as a chapel, were consumed by the flames in November, 1893, but replaced on the 8th of the following month by others which had for some time been under construction.

Nearer St. Boniface, a very different institution, due mostly to the liberality of Mgr. Taché and Rev. Mr. Ritchot, the parish priest of St. Norbert, was implanting itself by the banks of the Sale River, some ten miles from the archiepiscopal city. This was a monastery of Trappists, which was erected, at first on a very modest scale, during the summer of 1892. It was solemnly blessed by the metropolitan, October 18th, and placed under the patronage of the Mother of God with the beautiful title of Our Lady of the Prairies. The outward occupations of the newcomers were soon to result in a sort of model farm, and became to the neighbouring halfbreeds a much needed example of generous labours in the fields.

Meanwhile, other priests devoted themselves exclusively to the salvation of souls as pastors of new communities. Though their lot could scarcely be compared with that of the heroic missionaries of the Far North, privations, and even at times dangers, were by no means absent from the prosecution of their ministry. Witness, for instance, the sudden termination of Rev. Mr. Graton's career. Mr. Damien Graton had become parish priest of Regina early in the summer of 1886. In the first days of

March, 1891, he left on a tour of inspection of some outlying settlements. On his way back, it became evident that the thickness of the snow and consequent fatigue of his horses rendered further progress impossible. This was on Saturday, March 7th. As his services were imperatively demanded at Regina, he sent his man for other horses; but when the latter returned, the priest was found in a dying condition. Startled at the sight, his companion rushed back to town for a doctor who, on reaching the stricken missionary, found him dead.*

Rev. Joseph Caron, who providentially came west a few months after the melancholy event, succeeded Mr. Graton, August 25, 1891, in the charge of the parish. An exceptionally able man was the new incumbent; yet no degree of ability seemed a match for the wiles of the Northwest Territories politicians. Under the deleterious influence of those in power at Winnipeg, new school legislation was soon (1892) introduced by the Hon. Mr. W. G. Haultain, which, more hypocritical than that of Manitoba, was no less effective in setting at naught the right Catholics had so far enjoyed of educating their children according to the dictates of their conscience. That legislation created the strange spectacle of supposedly Catholic schools directed and managed

*Rev. D. Graton was born at St. Martin, P.Q., on the 11th of Sept., 1858, and made his studies at Ste. Thérèse and in the Montreal Séminary. He was ordained March 25, 1882, and served one year and a half as private secretary to Archbishop Fabre, after which he was appointed assistant to the parish priest of Ile Bézard, and then to that of Pointe Claire, whence he left for the West.

by Protestants, according to Protestant ideals, with the help of only such books as were approved of by Protestants. Taché and Grandin, in common with their ablest missionaries, strenuously protested to Ottawa against such a pernicious anomaly; but their complaints remained unheeded.

Nay, that policy of trifling with the conscience of the people was even extended to the native population. The penning up of the Indians within definite reserves, guarded by bodies of mounted police, had resulted in swarms of Protestant preachers, who manifested a sudden zeal for the wards of the Canadian nation, and would fain have reaped where others had sown. Despite the numerical majority of the Catholic Indians, those new missionaries were everywhere favoured at the expense of the priests, and, as an excuse for that partiality, statistics were falsified in such a way as to show an exaggerated number of Protestants on the Indian reserves.

Thus, to speak of only one limited area which was admitted to be an exceptionally favourable field for Protestant proselytism, the Gordon reservation counted 18 Catholics and 36 pagans, yet was labelled as entirely Protestant in the Ottawa Blue Books. That of Poor-Man had 9 Catholics and only 4 Protestants, all the other natives thereon being heathens; but Ottawa accepted reports from interested parties which described it as wholly Protestant. Day-Star Reserve did not contain a single Protes-

tant, though its inhabitants were officially represented as being all of that faith.⁵

However, even with the help of those unreliable figures, only a majority of less than 1,100 could be marshalled on behalf of the "reformed" faith among the natives of the entire west—exclusive of the north, where, in spite of the defections we have occasionally mentioned, the Catholics still formed the immense majority among the Indians. The official figures for the dioceses of St. Boniface and St. Albert, as well as for the Vicariate-Apostolic of the Saskatchewan, were 7,951 Catholic Indians against 9,040 native Protestants. Nevertheless, within the same territory there were at the time only three Catholic Indian agents against twenty-four who professed the Protestant faith under its multifarious forms. This enormous disproportion rendered the non-Catholic officials all the bolder in their antagonism to the Catholic missionaries.

To offset, in a very limited degree, the sadness of such a situation, we may now mention the erection of a new church for the Winnipeg parish of the Immaculate Conception and of a cathedral at Prince Albert. The corner-stone of the former was blessed by Archbishop Taché on May 8, 1892, and the church was opened for Divine service on March 17th of the following year. This is the pretty edifice which now graces the environs of the C. P. R. station.

The corner-stone of the Prince Albert cathedral

⁵*Missions des O. M. I.*, vol. XXXIII, pp. 280, 281.

was blessed on May 22, 1892, by the same prelate, accompanied by a galaxy of Church dignitaries from the east, among whom were Archbishop Duhamel, of Ottawa, and Bishop Laffèche, of Three Rivers, together with the new bishop, Mgr. Grouard. The sacred edifice was to be of brick on a stone foundation, 96 feet by 50.

Another consoling event was the holding of the National Congress and the adoption of the strong



SENATOR GIRARD'S SIGNATURE.

measures of protestation against the Manitoba school laws which we have already mentioned. But even then joy was not unalloyed for the Catholics: its president, Senator Girard, passed away at St. Boniface, September 12, 1892, almost immediately after protesting against the laws of spoliation. Marc A. Girard was one of the most remarkable in the phalanx of superior laymen with whom Mgr. Taché had surrounded himself after the troubles of 1869-70.* Mr. Thomas A. Bernier was appointed,

*He was born at Varennes, Quebec, on the 25th of April, 1822, and studied at the College of St. Hyacinthe at the same time as the future Archbishop of St. Boniface. He was the Reeve of his native town, when, in 1870, he left for the West in company with that prelate. Our readers have now some knowledge of the honourable rôle he played there.

October 26, 1892, to succeed him in the Dominion Senate.

Another appointment for which the archbishop was ever longing was that of a coadjutor to share the burden of the administration of his immense diocese. As we have already seen, his heart's desire had been to get an Oblate for a successor; but, after long hesitations on the part of the General Administration of his Order, his instances had been met with an explicit refusal, for which past misunderstandings were no doubt partly responsible. These being now cleared away by Father Martinet's visit, Mgr. Taché thought it expedient to resume negotiations to the same end.

This time success crowned his efforts. In so far as the Oblate General was concerned, Father Langevin, then at Ottawa, was ceded to the venerable archbishop, with permission to have him presented to the Roman authorities for the post of coadjutor with the right of future succession. He was to leave as soon as possible for Manitoba, there to exercise at first the functions of vicar of the Oblate missions and make himself known to his future diocesans. But on the heels of the successful termination of the prelate's negotiations came the news of Father Fabre's death, which occurred on October 26, 1892. As a consequence, Father Langevin stayed at Ottawa pending the election of a new Superior-General.

The choice of the General Chapter fell on the Rev.



RT. REV. JOS. FABRE
Second Superior-General of the Oblates

Louis Soullier, May 11, 1893, and, on the following first of July, Father Langevin arrived at Winnipeg with the title of superior of St. Mary's house and of vicar of all the Oblates under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Mgr. Taché.

This was a precious acquisition for the pioneer missionaries of the Northwest. Unfortunately the joy consequent on this accession to their ranks was but too soon tempered by an accident which cost the life of one of their veterans. After forty-five years of missions and other services in the west, Father Maisonneuve, who had for a long time been afflicted by an almost complete deafness, was struck, July 21st, by a railway train, and died of his injuries on the 28th of the same month.

In spite of his age and infirmities, the deceased had for a long time been filling the post of procurator, or manager of the finances, of the archdiocese and of the Vicariate-Apostolic of Athabasca-Mackenzie, making all the purchases for the distant missions of the latter and forwarding the same to destination. Hence his position was far from being a sinecure. He was advantageously replaced by Father Joseph U. Poitras, O.M.I., who arrived at St. Boniface on October 8, 1893, after having filled for an already long period a similar post in the east.

But Mgr. Taché was not the only western prelate whose apostolic field was visited by the grim Reaper. In the beginning of 1893, Mgr. Grandin had been

astounded to learn of the death, on the same day (January 10th), of such veterans as Fathers Alexis André and Victor Bourguine. The former expired at Calgary, the latter at St. Albert. Both had passed most useful careers among Indians and whites, and universal regret followed them to the grave.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DEATH OF ARCHBISHOP TACHE.

1892-1895.

While some of the pioneer missionaries were thus going to their reward, younger recruits walked in their footsteps, penetrating even to the dreary shores of the Polar Sea. In the course of 1892, Father Camille Lefebvre was stationed at the mission of the Holy Name of Mary, on Peel River, whence he attended to the spiritual needs of the hyperborean aborigines. Hearing of the forthcoming visit of a Protestant clergyman to his Eskimo flock, he embarked for the sea coast on July 22nd, in the *oomiak* (whaleskin bark) of a chief named Toretatsiark (Crooked Eyes).

The trip furnished him with a new illustration of the miserable lot of woman in pagan society. Describing the craft he used, the missionary says: "I occupied the place of honour by the side of my adopted father [his host and protector, Toretatsiark]; the dogs had the second place, and the women the third. It was not without reason that the latter were so placed; for it is to them that is reserved the task of wielding the big oars from morning to evening."¹

¹*Missions*, vol. XXXII., p. 168.

Going down the Peel and the Mackenzie, the little party reached, July 30th, the Eskimo village, situate on an island laved on the one side by the waters of the great northern stream and on the other by the waves of the Polar Sea. The natives were in high glee, as a result of a total catch of fifteen white whales. Hence the missionary was well received.

He had been a week trying to instruct the people when the canoe of the Protestant clergyman was sighted. The Eskimos had hitherto proved neither fervent nor eager for instruction; but the coming of the minister forced them to take sides with the one or the other. They decided in favour of the priest, whom they twice asked to speak of "the Man on the cross he was wearing at his belt." Father Lefebvre complied as best he could with the limited command of their language he possessed. But when it became a question of baptizing the children, none were presented for the sacramental rite.

Then when, on August 15th, the Eskimos commenced to scatter in search of reindeer and fur-bearing animals, the missionary was confronted by a difficulty with which most of his northern co-workers are familiar, and which on that account it may be advisable to relate in some detail.

He was told that nobody intended to go up to the fort on the Peel. There he was, therefore, without means of returning to his home, a stranger stranded on a lonely island of the Polar Sea which was soon to become a perfect desert. What was he to do?

Suddenly he remembered that, about thirty miles up the river, a few Loucheux Indians were camped: if he could only find somebody to convey him thither! Luckily he learned of some Eskimos going in that direction. He embarked with them, only to find the Loucheux gone!

But dint of coaxing and offering high wages, the priest finally succeeded in engaging the services of an Eskimo family—those aborigines never travelling singly. It was on the 19th of August. To the anxieties of the previous days now succeed joy and hope in the heart of the forlorn missionary; but neither is of long duration. On the 20th, Lefebvre gets up bright and cheerful at the thought of leaving at last for his home, whither urgent business calls him. But he counts without his host.

"If you do not add so much to the promised wages, I shall not go," declares the latter.

The priest is at his mercy; what can he do but yield under protest and beg for an immediate departure? But Mr. Eskimo is in no hurry.

"We shall not leave until to-morrow," he says.

On the morrow, it is the same refrain over again. The missionary had to wait until the 24th. Then, after two days' nonchalant travelling, his man thought he would enjoy a well-deserved rest, inasmuch as some sort of a breeze was rippling the surface of the water. By this time Father Lefebvre was out of patience and perfectly disgusted.

"Since you evidently do not intend to take me

to the fort, I shall have to perform the journey on foot," he remarks.

Whereupon, loud protestation on the part of the wily Eskimo, who probably expects a further augmentation in his wages.

"What!" he exclaims, "to walk such a distance without a trail? No man alive could do it, especially as the fort is still very, very far."

But experience had taught the priest that he could not count on such a man. Therefore, with six lean fishes, two pounds of flour, and dried meat for one meal, Lefebvre sets his back on his unfaithful canoeman, and starts for the fort, 150 miles distant.

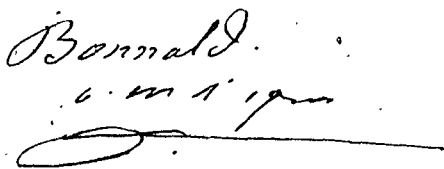
To adequately describe the fatigues of the route he then had to follow is simply impossible. This was nothing but the bank of the river, steep and precipitous in many places, when he had not to force his way through bushy willows and across deep ravines and affluents of the river. The missionary would certainly have succumbed to the task had he not, by the merest chance, met after one day's journeying a Loucheux tent, the inmates of which were at first tempted to take him for a ghost, and who consented to convey him to his home, out of a sense of Christian duty and as an implicit protest against the conduct of the hated Eskimos.

A different kind of trial was then afflicting Father Bonnald, the veteran of the Cumberland missions. All the camps of the Protestant Indians within the Hudson Bay basin were echoing the news that he

had become mad, and, casting off his cross, had fled in the direction of the "great countries," Europe. Even his own people in distant parts were momentarily deceived, and immensely aggrieved on hearing the startling news.

The truth no sooner became known than the natives themselves were stricken by an epidemic complaint which played havoc among them. On November 18, 1893, Bonnald received a roll of birch bark on which was written in syllabic characters a missive of which the following is a translation:

"My Prayer Chief and Father in God. My heart is broken, because I cannot see thee; my eyes pour

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Bonnald". Below the name, there is a line of syllabic characters and a long, horizontal, wavy flourish.

FATHER BONNALD'S SIGNATURE.

forth torrents night and day at the thought that I shall see thee no more here below. What a pity for my soul that thou art not here to wash and cleanse it with thy prayer! Farewell, Father, I kiss that hand which so often blessed me and placed Jesus on my tongue. I do not think I have as yet lost Jesus. I hope that, in his mercy, he is going to take me to himself. Pray thou much for me. I who write to thee am the poor little dog, John Bighetti."

Other scenes again greet us on Lake Athabasca

*Missions, vol. XXXII., p. 51.

and the Mackenzie River. There material progress in a most unexpected form is timidly feeling its way towards the Catholic missions. Hitherto one of the chief drawbacks had been the exorbitant sums the northern stations had had annually to pay the Hudson's Bay Company for the transportation of their outfits. Bishop Grouard had received in Europe alms which allowed him to get the machinery of a much needed sawmill of moderate dimensions for his mission on Lake Athabasca. With the help of Bro. Lavoie, he conceived the idea of applying this to the propelling of a small steamer. But, after a trial on the swift outlet of the lake, it became evident that the motor was too weak. Aided by generous friends of the missions, the progressive prelate bought more powerful machines and finally succeeded in his enterprise, thereby saving an enormous sum to his poor missions.

By this time, the veteran Mgr. Clut was ailing so seriously that it was deemed expedient to send him east for treatment. He left his beloved Indians amidst scenes of unaffected desolation, which clearly prove that gratitude is not foreign to their make-up.

A still more illustrious patient was Archbishop Taché himself. Owing to age and past labours, the anxieties consequent on the destruction of the Catholic schools and the ravages of a disease of which he would not admit the presence in his system, his life had now come to be a daily martyrdom. Yet, pending the nomination of a coadjutor, his

activities continued incessant and his vitality apparently unimpaired. He could no more travel in a horse carriage; but he would occasionally profit by the conveniences brought to his door by modern progress. He was thus enabled to visit on the line of the C. P. R., the incipient town of Brandon, and bless (May 14, 1893), a modest church edifice for the Catholics of the place.

Then he repaired to Somerset, July 31st, to see the new pastors of St. Léon, the Canons Regular who had succeeded Mr. Bitshe, deceased March 16, 1892.

Early in 1894 he was delighted to receive the visit of his new Superior-General, Rt. Rev. Louis Soullier, accompanied by Very Rev. Father Antoine, Provincial of Canada, whose passage through North America gave rise to a series of festivities, grand receptions in the chief cities and, in the intimacy of the Oblate houses, precious conferences between father and sons. The General arrived at St. Boniface on the 28th of April, and he did not leave the archbishop for the west before the 15th of May. The Oblate prelate had seen and appreciated the new head of his Order: he could now intone his *Nunc dimittis*.

As a matter of fact, it would seem as if he had simply waited for the issue of that visit in order to leave a world which had not always granted him that meed of justice that was due him. Four days after the arrival of Father Soullier, the archbishop

felt so tired and ill that he repaired to the convent to be nursed by the Grey Nuns. Thence he went, on the 8th of June, to attend the anniversary requiem celebrated at the cathedral for his venerable predecessor. He was not to re-enter alive that humble temple which he had himself built thirty-two years before.

A terrible malady, gravel, was slowly but surely leading him to the grave. Yet he would not consent to be treated accordingly until almost unbearable sufferings and the monitions of friends convinced him that an examination by professional men had become necessary. This was made, June 18th, and, as a result, an immediate operation had to be resorted to, which seemed at first successful. But fever supervened, a circumstance which, considering the age and otherwise impaired state of health of the patient, was premonitory of a fatal denouement.

Bishop Grandin happened to be near the sick bed of the venerable patient, as well as Fathers Langevin and Allard, with Mr. Messier and other priests. Taché's quondam auxiliary gave him (June 20th) the holy Viaticum in presence of a numerous clergy, secular and regular. Two days later, after having renewed his profession of faith and recited the formula of his Oblation, the first Archbishop of St. Boniface, the greatest Canadian of the West, left the theatre of his labours for a better world at 6.10 A.M., on June 22, 1894, at the age of almost seventy-one.

His demise was the signal for universal lamenta-

tions. During five days his remains were viewed by an endless procession of sympathizers, in the ranks of which some fifteen thousand Protestants were remarked. The funeral took place on the 27th of the same month, in presence of four bishops, the Lieutenant-Governor of the province, two of his ministers, several judges, and numerous officials. Mgr. Duhamel, Archbishop of Ottawa, delivered an appropriate eulogy in English, and Mgr. Laflèche, who had declined on the plea of ill-health the post occupied by the deceased, extolled in French the character of his life-long friend.

To the encomiums of the eminent Churchmen, the local non-Catholic press joined its powerful voice. Foes and friends alike testified to the great loss the Canadian West had sustained in his disappearance from the scene of his many battles for what he conceived to be right and justice.

"His place can never be filled," declared the *Free Press* in a five-column article. "The life of such a man always comes to its end too soon. Yet those who mourn will say in reference to him: 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his' . . . The kindness with which he received strangers could not be exceeded. Even in the midst of controversy his most determined opponents had no occasion to complain of the spirit which he manifested towards them. His convictions were strong, and the ability with which he maintained them was great, but his style of writing was calcu-

lated to allay rather than excite bitterness. . . . It was not his lot to see accomplished all that he desired, but he could feel that he had left nothing undone."³

This last remark refers to the much-debated school question. The *Nor'-wester* (now the *Telegram*) had on the very day of Taché's death, a lengthy editorial with heavy black borders, wherein the great figure of the departed was considered from a different point of view. It said in part:

"As a man of the world, he comes before us more prominently than as a religious, and viewing him in this light, we cannot but express our admiration for the late archbishop. Few men there are, possessed of such innate goodness as Monseigneur Taché possessed, and fewer still more honest and upright in their dealings with their fellow-man. To those who knew him, there can be but one estimate of him, which is that he was goodness itself."

Then, referring to the absorbing topic of Catholic education, the same paper went on to say: "The adversities of late years were too much for his sensitive nature, and the aged prelate, though ever buoyant in hope, slowly sank down under the betrayal of that trust, which he confidently reposed in others. . . . When we look back upon that great and good man, we stand astonished, as it were, and we can be no more than silent witnesses to the stainless career, which was his."⁴

³*The Daily Free Press*, 23rd June, 1894.

⁴*The Daily Nor'-wester*, 22nd June, 1894.

Even the *Tribune* felt bound to bring its tribute of kindly appreciation to the grave of the great archbishop. "By his death humanity has lost a warm friend and the Church he loved so well, a faithful servant," it said. "In many ways Archbishop Taché will be sorely missed from the community, for he was a personal friend, counselor and guide of scores who had learned to love him. . . . In the presence of all that is mortal of this distinguished prelate, all differences of opinion are put aside, and it is impossible to discern aught but bright portents of a well-rounded life of usefulness and of sacrifice for God's cause. . . . He died on the battlefield, with his sword in his hand, and his armor girt about him."*

This last sentence likewise refers to the eminent Churchman's incessant labours, especially those with the pen, on behalf of Christian education. For Taché wielded a pen which was remarkable for purity of diction, unerring logic, and the delicacy with which the inmost sentiments of his mind were expressed. He wrote in French, and it is safe to assert that very few Canadians were his superiors even from the mere standpoint of style.

The writings to which the *Tribune* evidently refers were a defence of the Catholic schools which appeared in the Manitoban press and even in the *London Times*. The latter were afterwards republished in pamphlet form, both in French and English, under the title of "A Page of the History of

**The Daily Tribune*, 22nd June, 1894.

the Schools in Manitoba during Seventy-five Years." It is a little masterpiece of close logic, establishing in 52 double-column pages the right of Catholics to denominational schools by proofs deduced from the most irrefragable sources.

Apart from this and other pamphlets prompted by political conjunctures, Archbishop Taché published two works of wider scope, each of which had at least two editions. Both were originally written for his religious family, and appeared serially in the *Missions des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*. The first was an exquisite little work called *Vingt Années de Missions dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique*, which gives a faithful account of the Oblates' labours in Northern America from 1845 to 1865. It was republished in book form at Montreal in 1866. The second, entitled *Esquisse sur le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique*, after having similarly appeared serially, had moreover the honours of an English translation. We have already reproduced in a preceding chapter an appreciation of that work, in which science by no means detracts from the readableness and delicate aroma proper to the great prelate's writings. It was first issued in 1869, was translated into English the following year, and appeared in a second edition in the course of 1901.*

On the morrow of Taché's demise the principal Manitoban paper said that "the work of him who is gone will always remain as an honourable monu-

*Montreal, C. O. Beauchemin & Fils.

ment to his memory." It is safe to say that his literary works have a lasting value; but he was above all a bishop in God's Church, and it is as such that he must be judged. When he was ordained priest in 1845, he was only the sixth Catholic clergyman within the British possessions from Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains. At the time of his death, the ecclesiastical province of St. Boniface within the same territory counted no less than 147 priests, under five bishops, and at least 150 nuns instead of the four who had come west the year prior to his own arrival there.

That personnel was distributed as follows in 1894:

For the 21,000 Catholics of the archdiocese of St. Boniface there were 31 secular priests, 36 regular priests (Jesuits and Oblates, without counting 7 monks or Regular Canons), 85 churches and chapels, 35 parishes, 1 college, 1 seminary with 8 students, 14 industrial schools for Indians, 14 convents of Grey Nuns of Montreal, Faithful Companions of Jesus, and Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, 2 hospitals and 1 Trappist monastery.

The diocese of St. Albert counted 28 regular priests (Oblates of Mary Immaculate), 4 secular priests, 9 lay brothers O.M.I., 2 industrial schools, 36 parish or mission schools, 3 orphanages, 4 hospitals, 32 Grey Nuns of Montreal, 5 Grey Nuns of

The Free Press, 23rd June, 1894.

Nicolet, 26 Faithful Companions of Jesus, and 5 Sisters of the Assumption.

The Vicariate-Apostolic of Athabasca-Mackenzie, in addition to a coadjutor (Mgr. Clut) to the titular (Mgr. Grouard), boasted 23 Oblate fathers and Grey Nuns in three establishments. That of Saskatchewan had a more limited personnel, viz., 17 regular priests (Oblates), 1 secular priest just arrived (1894), Rev. Mr. Barbier, 7 lay brothers, and an establishment of Montreal Grey Nuns, with another of Faithful Companions of Jesus. The Catholic population of that new vicariate was 7,000.*

These figures give an idea of the wonderful strides the Church had made in the west under the guidance of wise and zealous pastors such as the one she had just lost. These, like all things mundane, come and go; but the Church is immutable and confident in her Divine promise of immortality, in which even local branches share to a certain extent. Therefore the disappearance of Archbishop Taché, regrettable as it was, could scarcely be represented as anything more than an episode in her life.

Rev. Father Allard, O.M.I., who had enjoyed in a particular manner the confidence of the departed prelate, whose vicar-general he had been for many years, temporarily succeeded him as administrator of the diocese. Then his own place at the helm was definitely taken by a worthy pilot, though not before conflicting counsels had rendered the choice of the

*See Appendix G.



MOST REV. L. P. A. LANGEVIN, O.M.I.
Archbishop of St. Boniface



same, if not difficult, at least slower than might have been the case had the secular and regular clergy been unanimous on the question.

But it was felt at Rome that the marked preferences of the venerable deceased, who was a good judge of men, could not be disregarded. Consequently, Father Louis Philippe Adélarde Langevin, O.M.I., was appointed Archbishop of St. Boniface on January 8, 1895. On the following 19th of March he was solemnly consecrated by Archbishop Fabre, of Montreal, assisted by Mgr. Duhamel and Mgr. Grandin, in presence of a vast concourse of faithful and clergy. Among the latter we must mention the Archbishop of Quebec, the Bishops of Three Rivers, Nicolet, Valleyfield and Ogdensburg (U.S.A.), as well as the coadjutor of St. Hyacinthe and the Abbot of Oka.

The new prelate was the son of François Théophile Langevin, a notary public, and Marie Racicot, whose brother is to-day (1909) auxiliary to the Archbishop of Montreal. He was born at St. Isidore de Laprairie, diocese of Montreal, on August 24, 1855, and made brilliant studies at the Seminary of Montreal. Before his ordination he entered the Institute of the Oblates, wherein he pronounced his final vows on July 25, 1882. Five days later (July 30th), he was raised to the priesthood, after which he occupied various posts in his Order, the last of which, prior to his coming west, was that of director of the Great Seminary of Ottawa.

On the day of his consecration, the new archbishop made such a favourable impression that one of his colleagues in the episcopate could not help remarking: "Not only does he succeed Mgr. Taché, but he really fills his place." It is too soon for the historian to show by a recital of subsequent events how far this observation was warranted. The mellowing influence of time is needed to permit of a faithful delineation of figures and deeds which, at St. Boniface and farther west, are still too near our mental vision to be reproduced with the proper degree of accuracy and impartiality.

PART VI

In British Columbia

CHAPTER XXXVII.

BEGINNINGS OF THE CHURCH ON THE PACIFIC COAST.
1774-1842.

Nootka Sound, on the southwestern extremity of Vancouver Island, is the cradle of the Catholic Church on the North Pacific coast and British Columbia. The first representatives of the white race in those remote quarters were Spaniards. As became dutiful subjects of His Catholic Majesty, their very first act in landing at any place was an act of religion. "We named this post *De los Remedios*," says an old chronicler of a point slightly north of the 57th degree of latitude. "The same day, having prepared ourselves for defence against the Indians, five of us landed about noon, when, having posted ourselves in the safest place we could fix upon, we planted the cross with all proper devotion, cutting another on a rock, and displaying the Spanish colours, according to our instructions on that head."¹

¹"Journal of a Voyage in 1775 to explore the Coast of America, Northward of California," by Don Francisco Antonio Maurelle, p. 504 of "Miscellanies," by the Hon. Daines Barrington. London, 1781.

This was in 1775. Three years afterwards the famous Captain Cook visited the southwestern end of Vancouver Island, which the Spaniards had reconnoitred in 1774, and one of the results of his explorations was to noise abroad the richness of the country in furs and fish. As a consequence, the Spanish viceroy, Don Flores, resolved upon the occupation of Nootka Sound, as a means of forestalling any settlement there by the English. An establishment was therefore commenced on its shores in May, 1789, with a governor, by the name of Martinez, at its head.

The old chart which points out the various buildings of that short-lived colony shows no church or chapel; but we are certain from other sources that there was indeed such an edifice, which stood in the centre of the village. Its location is to-day religiously remembered by the Indians who, moreover, still speak of two Franciscan padres whom their ancestors had seen in the midst of the pale-faced strangers.

We know that Father Magin Catala was there in 1793-94, and that he was succeeded by a Father Gomez, who probably stayed with the colonists until they had to make room for the English. Nor was the presence of the missionaries entirely fruitless. When they left Nootka, some twenty natives accompanied them to San Carlos, California, where they were baptized and became permanent settlers.

These facts, which are not generally known, de-

rive confirmation from the traditions even of strange Indians on the same coast. The first bishop of Vancouver Island is authority for the statement that, in 1850, a French sailor who had deserted his ship was redeemed from the Yookltas, among whom he had been held in slavery. This individual averred that an old woman of that tribe had spoken to him of men clad in garments of sombre hue, with their heads shaven, save for a crown of hair, who had, long before, taught her people to pray and sing. She adduced as a last vestige of their teaching the word *alleluia*, which she pronounced quite distinctly.²

Moreover, the first Canadian missionaries in the valley of the Lower Columbia found in the hands of Chinook Indians, a tribe which had from time immemorial commercial intercourse with the natives of Nootka, "very old crucifixes," which they claimed were due to the Spanish skippers.³

Lastly, when, later on, a permanent mission was established on the western coast of Vancouver Island, its promoter came in contact with natives who had a clear remembrance of a former religious establishment in their midst. "At the time of the Spaniards there were two priests, big stout men, and they were both bald-headed," declared one of them, who added: "My grand-uncle, who told me this, used to come around to Friendly Cove, and the white men would keep Sunday. There was the Sun-

²*Rapport sur les Missions du Diocèse de Québec*; Mars, 1835, pp. 112, 113.

³*Ibid.*, Juillet, 1847, p. 12.

day-house [or church]—pointing to a spot about the centre of the present village, and they would go on their knees and cross themselves, and at the turn of the winter solstice they had a great Sunday [feast] and they had two babies—is not that what you now call Christmas? Oh! yes, there were priests here, and all the men and women would have to bathe for Saturday and be ready for Sunday, and they learned hymns. I know them yet.”⁴

Whereupon the old man began to sing some chant in which the words *Mi Dios* (my God) were recognizable. The monastic tonsure gave to the benighted Indians the idea that the priests were bald, and the heavy Franciscan cloaks they wore must have been responsible for the impression that they were big men.

But these early sowings were not destined to have practical results among the aborigines of the Pacific coast. The seed had scarcely time to germinate before it was choked by the cockle of heresy brought there by the ships of the English, who dispossessed the Spaniards of their establishment at Nootka (March 25, 1795), and of their riparian rights elsewhere. It is nevertheless satisfactory to be in a position to assert that the Catholic was the first denomination which had representatives on the coast of Vancouver Island.

So was it with the mainland of what is now British

⁴“Vancouver Island and its Missions, Reminiscences of Rev. A. J. Brabant,” p. 2.

Columbia. The first white settlements there were planted in the northern interior of the province, an immense region which was then known as New Caledonia.⁵ As early as 1793, six Catholic French Canadians under the celebrated Alexander Mackenzie, of the Northwest Company, discovered the country in a voyage from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific. In 1805-07, were established Forts McLeod, Stuart or St. James, Fraser and George, under the direction and with the active coöperation of Simon Fraser. In the course of the following year, the same trader explored to its mouth in the sea the important stream which now bears his name.

Simon Fraser was a Catholic "with considerable conscience, and in the main holding to honest convictions," according to H. H. Bancroft, a historian with no special predilection for our Church. Catholics were also the French Canadians who became the first residents of the country, and Jules Maurice Quesnel, one of Fraser's lieutenants in his perilous exploration of the torrential river called after him.

Simon Fraser was born at Bennington, in the Province of Vermont, about the year 1776, of a Scotchman who was a captain in Burgoyne's army. After the death of his father, his mother crossed with her family over to Three Rivers rather than live under the dominion of those against whom her husband had fought. Simon was but sixteen when

⁵For interesting details on those foundations and the thrilling experiences of the whites among the northern savages, see "The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia," by the present writer.

he entered the Northwest Company; but his promotion was rapid. He occupied various positions of trust in his corporation; yet all his achievements pale before the stupendous exploration of the Fraser, that "horribly swearing" stream which constantly threatened to engulf his apparently fool-hardy party.

As to Jules M. Quesnel, he was a brother to the Hon. Frederic Auguste Quesnel who long shone at the bar and in the parliament of Lower Canada. In 1804 Jules was a trading clerk at Fort des Prairies, or Edmonton, whence he went west in 1807. An important tributary of the Upper Fraser is called after him.

Later on, most of the employees of the fur traders who, till 1830 and after, possessed and governed the country extending between 56° N. latitude to the valley of the Columbia were French Canadians, and therefore Catholics.

From 1834 to practically 1846 one who powerfully contributed to prepare the way for the evangelization of the country was the Indian wife of Peter Skene Ogden, a Hudson's Bay Company *bourgeois* famous in the history of the fur trade on the Pacific. She had been baptized in her native country, and never tired of communicating her religious knowledge to the aborigines who repaired to Fort St. James, on Stuart Lake; so that the native tribes, which were then not only numerous but populous, soon heard of God and his ministers, the "Black

Gowns," through the whites who, in a majority of cases, intermarried with them.

The fruits of such unions were a generation of half-caste children, who became especially numerous in the valley of the Wallamette, a tributary of the Columbia, where several whites who had been voyagers for the Pacific Fur Company, of John Jacob Astor, and then employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, had congregated to till the soil. They soon formed an important settlement which, added to that of Fort Vancouver, the principal post of the fur traders on the Pacific, was in dire need of the ministrations of religion when, on November 24, 1838, two devoted priests arrived at the latter place from far-off Quebec.

These were Revs. Norbert F. Blanchet and Modeste Demers, whose passage at St. Boniface we have already chronicled. Mr. Demers was to become the Apostle of British Columbia, and to this day his memory is held in veneration by many aboriginal tribes, who remember him as the priest who first took the Glad Tidings to their forefathers.

Born on October 12, 1809, at St. Nicolas, Lower Canada, Modeste Demers was ordained on February 7, 1836, after which he served fourteen months as assistant to the parish priest of Trois Pistoles. On April 27, 1837, he embarked at Lachine for the extreme west and, in company with Mr. Blanchet, his superior, he reached the eastern limits of what is now British Columbia on the 10th of the following

October. Four days afterwards, he offered up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at Big Bend, on the Upper Columbia. This was the very first time that this supreme act of worship was enacted on the mainland of the Pacific province.

The two missionaries established their headquarters on the lower course of that majestic stream, at Fort Vancouver, where they stayed until October, 1839. They then received permission from the traders to start a permanent missionary station near Fort Wallamette. But, burning with zeal for the spiritual welfare of the poor and lowly, Mr. Demers soon found himself again to the north of the present international boundary.

On the Lower Fraser and adjoining territory, were populous villages of Indians belonging to the great Salish family, to which the young apostle resolved to carry the word of God, in spite of the forebodings of those to whom he had so far ministered. These forebodings were based mostly on the state of continual hostility towards one another in which the various tribes lived, and, worse than all, on the persistent rumours that the dreaded Yookltas of the north intended shortly to make one of their periodical irruptions on their hereditary foes of the Fraser valley. The Yookltas were a powerful tribe, the terror of the southerners, which subsisted on the fruits of its raids and inhuman butcheries.

Nothing daunted by these distressing reports, Mr. Demers repaired to Fort Langley, a short distance

from the sea coast, which he reached by the end of August, 1841. There he found, under Mr. James M. Yale, a Protestant gentleman who treated him with consideration, eight French Canadians, one Iroquois and several Kanaks, all living with native women. He regularized their position in the eyes of the Church, and then turned his attention towards the Indians.

He was agreeably surprised to see that most of them knew how to make the sign of the cross and could sing some few simple hymns. This preliminary instruction they derived from their commerce with tribes already evangelized by Demers. In the crowd of three thousand aborigines to whom he preached the word of God, he remarked a Yooklta chief, tall and gaunt, and differing from all others by his high and broad forehead, his long locks and his general air of distinction. The northern potentate confessed to the humble minister of Christ that he had been a bad man, but assured him that he would carry to his people the wonderful message from heaven which he had been privileged to hear. From common reports his spontaneous confession was but the expression of truth, since it had been the wont of the strange chief to behead his prisoners and drink their blood.

On September 3, 1841, Demers baptized 99 children, and on the three following days no less than 263. As yet unfamiliar with the Christian ideas concerning the pardon of offences, most of the Indians

at first came to the instructions armed *cap-a-pié*; but they were soon induced to deposit their guns at the feet of the missionary, and afterwards to leave them at home entirely. Innumerable murders and other crimes had previously been committed by the heterogeneous crowd attracted by the young Canadian's preaching, and in the beginning many a "bad heart" was itching for revenge. Yet it is worthy of remark that not even the slightest altercation took place as long as the representative of the Prince of Peace was there.

Only one act of cruelty had he to deplore, which, to the Indians themselves, seemed the most natural occurrence in the world. It furnished the missionary with an occasion to give them a practical illustration of Christian ethics and exact full reparation from the guilty party. In common with all warlike aborigines, the coast Indians had numerous slaves, over whom they were supposed to enjoy an undoubted right of life or death. A member of Demers' new flock one day sank his dagger deep into the flesh of a slave with whom he was momentarily displeased. The priest blamed him in no measured terms for this act of inhumanity, and left him to his thoughts. As a result of that reprimand, the proud redskin, weeping for shame, confessed his crime publicly, and begged forgiveness at the feet of the missionary.

By the 7th of September, no fewer than 758 children had been regenerated in the waters of baptism, when Demers returned to his home by the Walla-



RT. REV. M. DEMERS
First Bishop of Vancouver Island



mette, after an absence of forty-four days, only part of which had been spent in the vicinity of Fort Langley.

Meanwhile Father De Smet, S.J., was announcing the Gospel to the Kootenay and Okanagan Indians, immediately to the west of the Rocky Mountains. As early as 1840 we find him among the former; but those aborigines lived both north and south of the boundary line, and it is not quite clear that he then crossed into the British possessions. In May, 1842, that celebrated missionary went from Colville to Fort Vancouver, in order to confer with the two Canadian priests as to the best means of extending their field of action.

Some seven or eight hundred miles north of the Columbia, beyond endless forests of conifers and snow-clad mountains, over an immense region dotted with numberless lakes, lay the primitive villages, or groups of tents, of representatives of the great Déné race, which has everywhere shown itself easily amenable to religious discipline. Four tribes, the Chilcotins, the Carriers, the Babines and the Sékanais, had heard, directly or indirectly, of the "man of God" and his wonderful message, and were clamouring for the favour of a visit from him.

On the other hand, the whites among them—all traders or the servants of traders—were no less desirous of obtaining that blessing. With that end in view, as well as to aid the incipient mission of Oregon, as the Lower Columbia valley was then

called, the superintendent of the northern posts, Mr. Peter S. Ogden, sent (November 15, 1841), the following circular to the personnel under him:

"Messrs. Blanchett and Demers, the Catholic missionaries on the Columbia, requested me, prior to taking my departure from Vancouver last summer, to ask the inland servants of the district to contribute towards their mission, and I have to request that you will make application accordingly."

We do not consider it inexpedient to give herewith the results of Ogden's appeal to the northerners of New Caledonia. The following are the names of the contributors whose offerings are recorded:^a

	£	s.	d.
William McBean.....	3	0	0
Louis Gagnon.....	2	0	0
Jean-Baptiste Bouchér (c).....	2	0	0
Jean-Baptiste Bouchér (d).....	1	0	0
P. Gun.....	1	0	0
W. F. Lane.....	2	0	0
Pierre Letendre.....	2	0	0
William Morwick.....	1	0	0
P. S. Ogden.....	2	0	0
William Thew.....	1	10	0
Jos. Brunette.....	0	10	0
Jean Couturier.....	1	0	0
Paul Fraser.....	2	0	0
O. La Ferté.....	2	0	0
J. Tubault (Thibault?).....	1	0	0
Pierre Roy.....	1	0	0

With a view to repaying the kindness of their distant benefactors, and at the same time in order to extend the reign of the Gospel among the numer-

^aFour other persons had not apparently had time to hand in their donations when the paper which contains those recorded above was taken to headquarters, Stuart Lake.

"History of the Northern Interior of B. C.," pp. 227, 228 of third edition.

ous wards of the New Caledonia traders, it was decided that Mr. Demers should join the brigade of horses and boats that yearly took up the supplies of the northern posts. In furtherance of that plan, that gentleman left on June 29, 1842, in company with Mr. Ogden and a number of French Canadian servants. The missionary has left us an account of his journey through the wilds of the British Columbia interior, part of which will bear reproduction.

"Such caravans," he wrote, "are composed of large crowds of men and horses, the latter packing the baggage and merchandise destined to the different posts of the north. That assemblage of men, horses, and baggage unhappily renders progress slow and irksome. It is nine or ten in the morning before everything can be made ready for a start. One must seek out and gather the animals set loose and scattered in all directions the previous night. After long hours of waiting, the band is finally brought in, and the neighing of the horses, the yells of the *engagés*, the oaths forced on them by impatience, the contestations of the inferiors and the orders of the leaders result in a confused uproar not always flattering to scrupulous ears.

"At length, after having partaken on the grass of a meal of dried salmon, they load the horses, and at ten o'clock we are off. Progress is exceedingly slow, and full of more or less disagreeable incidents. We must face a fiery atmosphere, an enervating sun, a suffocating dust, with sometimes a hill to climb and a ravine to cross. The first days especially a person

feels a general uneasiness, augmented by various inconveniences arising from the uncomfortable position he has to submit to while riding a horse already loaded with his chapel, his bedding, his household goods, and even his cooking implements. Fortunate is he if an untoward wind does not compel him to swallow waves of a thick dust, which prevents him from seeing two rods ahead. A dull and monotonous sound of conversing voices is constantly humming in your ears, which only the crossing of a creek or a river can interrupt. Then people draw nearer one another, the horses hesitate, the drivers shout and get angry; there are pushings, falls, and tumblings, with wrecks, which excite general merriment, and furnish a theme for conversation and laughter during the rest of the day.

“There is no halt until camping time, and the day’s work is over by three or four in the afternoon. Then everything is prepared for the night, the animals are unloaded and sent out to feed, the outfit is set in order, small groups of men insensibly form themselves in anticipation of the forthcoming rest, the inevitable meal of dried salmon is taken, and the sun has disappeared below the horizon.”²⁸

Five days’ march brought the party to Okanagan Forks, where Mr. Demers was welcomed by the natives who had, the previous spring, received the visit of Father De Smet. After baptizing twenty-eight children, he proceeded with the traders’ pack-train

²⁸To the Bishop of Quebec, 20th Dec., 1842.

as far as Kamloops, where no minister of the Gospel had so far penetrated. Received as the special envoy of the Almighty, he had none the less to tear himself from his newly-acquired children, and, always in the wake of the fur traders, he reached Fort Alexander, on the middle Fraser, by the 24th of August. On his way north, he had regenerated 85 children in the waters of baptism.

Fort Alexander was the terminus of the land route, where horses were exchanged for a flotilla of boats plying on the Fraser, the Nechaco and the Stuart rivers. He found its inhabitants a prey to that corruption which usually follows the indiscriminate commingling of the whites and reds. "They know of no moral restraint," he writes. "Among them the sacred laws of marriage are more loosely considered than in any other nation of North America. Promiscuity seems to enjoy an uncontested right; suicide, murder, and a thousand other disorders follow, as natural consequences, this contempt for the laws of the family."

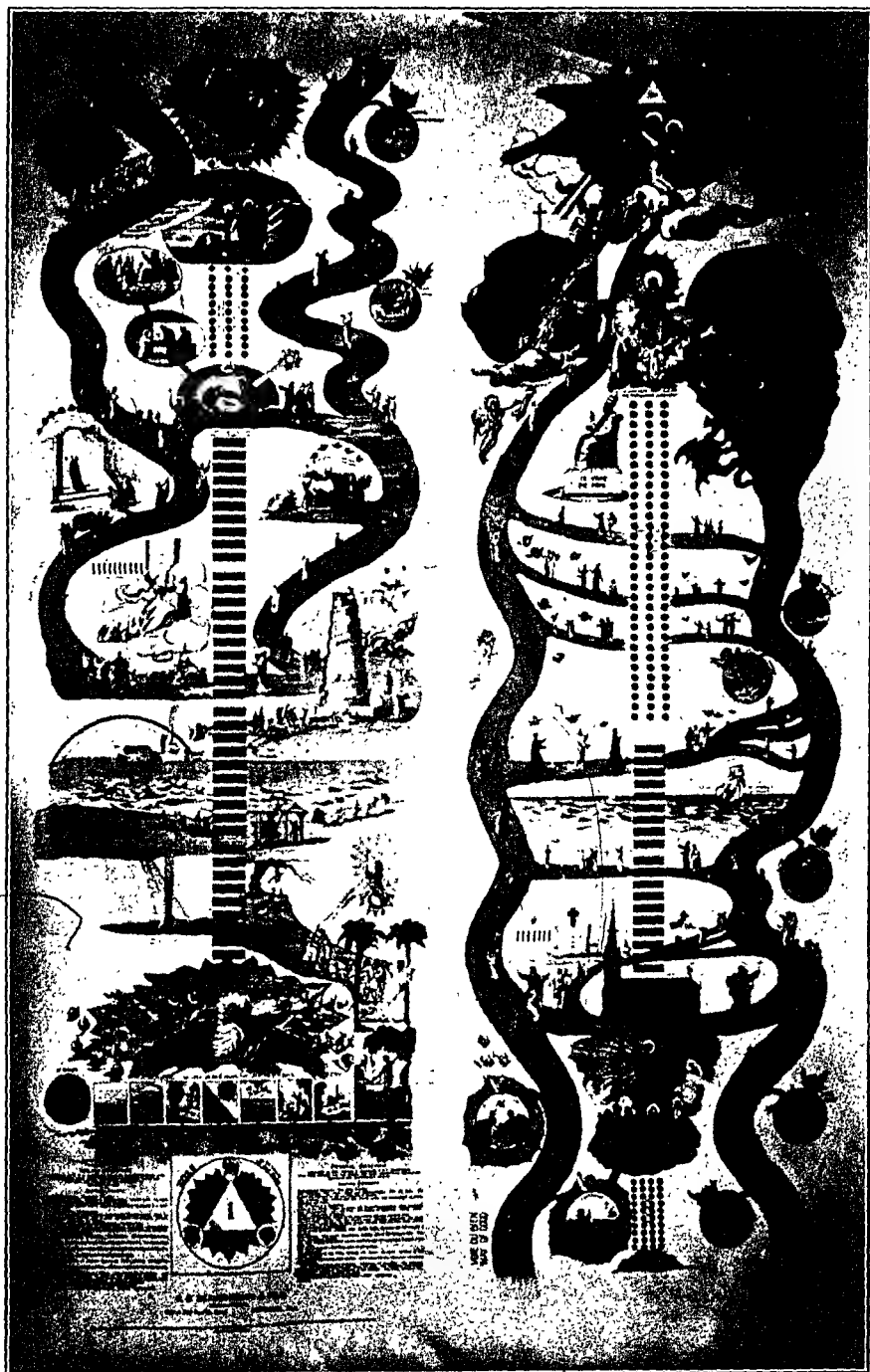
The missionary goes even so far as to say that "it is not to be wondered at if they outdo even animals by the infamy of their conduct."

After having recalled the sacred laws that were so openly violated, and administered 66 baptisms, mostly of children, Demers proceeded up to Lake Stuart, which he reached on the 16th of September. Fort St. James, on that beautiful sheet of water, was the emporium of the north, west of the Rocky Moun-

tains, and the capital of New Caledonia. Yet his stay there was unavoidably limited to three days, every moment of which was consecrated to the instruction of the adults and the christening of the children. In the former task he was, as usual, aided by Mr. Blanchet's "Catholic Ladder," with which our readers have already made some acquaintance.* He went even so far, in spite of the shortness of his sojourn at the "capital," as to teach the natives a few simple hymns he had composed at Fort Alexander.

Returning to this locality, he built there a rude church, and went down to William's Lake, where he gave the Shushwaps a sixteen days' mission. This

*A Protestant author, who resided in British Columbia long before it was annexed to Canada, Mr. Matthew Macfie, has the following notice of it in his work, "Vancouver Island and British Columbia" (London, 1865): "It consists of a long slip of paper, on which the principal events narrated in Scripture, from the creation of the world to the founding of the Christian Church, are illustrated. The progressive development of the Church of Rome from that time up to the present is also portrayed. The advantage of the arrangement is that a large amount of religious information is contained in remarkably small compass. The Hebrew version reads from right to left, but this 'Self-interpreting Bible' reads from bottom upwards. At the foot of the page the globe appears emerging out of chaos, and immediately above stand a male and female figure with a tree between them, representing our first parents partaking of the forbidden fruit. The other details of this invention may be readily guessed at, till we reach the Protestant Reformation, up to which point the line of instruction is intelligible and straight. Thence another line diverges at right angles from the main one, leading off the page into the abyss. This is marked *chemin du Protestantisme*. Then the straight path of the Church continues to *Pio Nono*, and onwards still to heaven" (Op. cit., pp. 475, 476). Father Lacombe's "Catholic Ladder," of which we present to the reader a greatly reduced reproduction, is now in universal use in the missions of the Canadian West, from Lake Superior to the Pacific. The right half of it is a continuation of the left side, to which it is usually added by means of pasting, so as to make it a continuous "ladder," of which the prototype was evidently that first prepared by Mr. Blanchet.



FATHER LACOMBE'S "CATHOLIC LADDER"
(Much Reduced)



was followed with great eagerness, and one day, as he came late to the catechism, he had to pass over the shoulders of his people without once touching the ground in repairing to his seat, so compact was the crowd that had gathered to hear him.

There also the natives put up a modest chapel, with pieces of parchment for window panes. In January, 1843, a Siberian cold held that region in its grip when, to the intense discomfiture of flock and pastor, the parchment was eaten up by the dogs, so that snares had to be set at night for the capture of the delinquents.

On February 21, 1843, Demers left his beloved children to return home. He reached his permanent residence in the Columbia on April 13th, after a most trying journey.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

BISHOP DEMERS AND THE OBLATES.

1842-1861.

As the Rev. Mr. Demers was leaving the scene of his labours throughout the mainland of British Columbia, Rev. Jean-Baptiste Bolduc, a new recruit from Canada, was accompanying Chief Factor James Douglas when that gentleman left, with twenty-two men, to erect at the southern end of Vancouver Island a fort which, under the name of Victoria, was destined to become the political capital of the whole country. Leaving on March 13, 1843, he reached his destination on the following day. A large concourse of Indians greeted him, and on the 19th of the same month, he celebrated the holy mysteries in presence of the Hudson's Bay Company employees and a congregation of 1,200 Indians, among whom he baptized 102 children.¹ This was

¹H. H. Bancroft gives in this connection a dialogue of his own invention between priest and native chief, after which he would have it that "Bolduc baptized until arrested by sheer exhaustion" ("History of British Columbia," p. 98. San Francisco, 1890). By the context it is evident that the flippant historian thereby refers to baptisms of adults, unprepared adults, and not of children, an insinuation which is as groundless as his plain statement that Bolduc was a Jesuit. That missionary was a secular priest, born 30th Nov., 1818, at St. Joachim, County of Montmorency, Que., and ordained 22nd Aug., 1841, after having studied at Quebec. He left for Oregon on the 1st of September of the same year, and stayed there until 1846. After having filled various posts in the ecclesiastical metropolis of Quebec, he died there, 8th May, 1889, honoured with the title of domestic prelate in the Court of Leo XIII.

the first mass said on Vancouver Island since the evacuation of Nootka Sound by the Spaniards.

With a view to meeting the requirements of such a vast field, Father De Smet had made his way to Europe, whence he returned, August 4, 1844, with four priests and some nuns. Among the former was Father John Nobili, S.J., who was commissioned to visit the northern posts of New Caledonia already evangelized by Mr. Demers.

Accordingly, the Jesuit father left, accompanied by a young novice lay brother, in June, 1845, for Stuart Lake and way-points. He stayed five days at Fort St. James, after which he had to leave by boats that went to Fort Alexander for a supply of grain. He returned north the following year, and reached Fort George, at the confluence of the Nechaco with the Fraser, by December 12, 1846. There he found, in addition to the local Indians, fifty Sékanais who had come from the Rocky Mountains to see him, and had waited nineteen days for his coming.

On the 24th, he was at Stuart Lake, where he spent eleven days not only preaching against the vices common to all humanity, but inveighing especially against the national customs of burning the dead and enslaving the widows. The great lodge consecrated to sorcery and jugglery was converted into a church, and because the good father encountered no active resistance to his designs, he went

away with the consoling impression that he had abolished all he had spoken against.²

From Stuart Lake he proceeded to Fort Kilmar, on Babine Lake, which he was the first missionary to see. Returning to Fort St. James, he could not at first obtain the ear of his people, handicapped as he was by a natural timidity and a series of festivities among the natives. But, early in January, 1847, he made up for the lost time by keeping the Indians busy hearing instructions and learning catechism until the beginning of Lent, when he turned his steps to the south.

During the same campaign,³ he visited the Chilcotins, a rather troublesome Déné tribe, the southernmost of the family within British Columbia. Those Indians had never seen a priest when he reached their first village, October 24th (probably 1847). After having blessed some sort of cemetery for the same band, he repaired to two others of their meeting-places, which were offered a similar opportunity of profiting by his ministrations. Kindly and as yet little familiar with the ways of the aborigines, Father Nobili baptized among the Chilcotins a num-

"I had the happiness of abolishing the custom of burning the dead, and that of inflicting torments upon the bodies of the surviving wives or husbands. They solemnly renounced all their juggling and idolatries" (in "Western Missions and Missionaries," by Fr. De Smet, p. 514).

²The year is very hard to ascertain. Nobili's Memoirs seem to put it as 1856, an evident mistake, perhaps for 1846. But this last cannot be any more correct, since from baptism certificates we have seen in his own handwriting, it is certain that he was on Babine Lake, about 500 miles away, on the 25th of October, 1846.

ber of adults whom he would undoubtedly have left longer under probation had he possessed more experience of their natural fickleness.⁴

While Nobili was thus evangelizing the natives of New Caledonia, his confrère De Smet was visiting the Kootenays of Tobacco Plains, whom he found in thirty lodges (August, 1845). Hunger had forced many families to cross the Rockies in quest of buffalo.

There again we are face to face with the proselytizing propensities of the early French in America. A Canadian, named Edouard Berland, had been for some time in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company when Father De Smet met him.⁵ The missionary was delighted to realize that the Indians had kept up the good resolutions taken some five years before. Since his last visit to them they had, he wrote, "followed to the letter all they remembered of [his] recommendations"; and why? because "Mr. Berland had exerted his zeal to maintain [them] and their brethren in the good dispositions in which [he] had the consolation of finding them. . . . They habitually assembled for morning and evening prayers, continued the practice of singing

⁴Father J. Nobili was born in Rome on the 8th of April, 1812. The son of a lawyer, he was educated at the Roman College, and entered the Society of Jesus in the capacity of a novice on the 14th of November, 1828. But it was not till 1843 that he was ordained priest. Towards the end of that year he sailed for Oregon with Father De Smet. In 1849 his superiors ordered him to California, and at the end of February, 1856, we find him as superior of Santa Clara College, where he died, being buried on the 3rd of the following month.

⁵For an interesting circumstance of Berland's life among the western traders, see our *Dictionnaire historique*, art. Berland, Edouard.

canticles in French and Flathead, and faithfully observed the Sabbath precept."¹⁶

De Smet was the first minister of religion to penetrate among the British Kootenays. He improved his opportunity by baptizing 105 persons among them, of whom 20 were adults. Then followed the erection, with proper solemnity, of a large cross, destined to remind the people of the obligations they had contracted. He left them for the country of the Blackfeet on August 30, 1845.

Reverting to the Rev. Mr. Mod. Demers, a most important event, which was to have far-reaching consequences, had just taken him from the ranks of the common clergy to place him on a throne, humble and modest though this was. Owing to the distance of the Oregon missions from all ecclesiastical centres, his superior, Rev. N. F. Blanchet, who had reached the Pacific with the title and powers of a vicar-general, had been raised to the episcopate, and almost immediately after been promoted to the rank of an archbishop, with the title of Oregon City, a See created for the circumstance. In spite of his protestations, Mr. Demers was given him as a suffragan, being appointed Bishop of Vancouver Island,

¹⁶Letter dated Upper Ford of the Flatbow [Kootenay] River, 2nd Sept., 1845.

"I do not know what tears I should use to express my misfortune," he wrote from St. Paul, Oregon, to Vicar-General Cazeau, under date 22nd Sept., 1847. . . . "How wretched I am! What shall I do? I wish not to accept, and at the same time I do not feel I have the courage to do what I said I would do in my last letter. I cannot bring myself to the idea of leaving the archbishop in the critical circumstances in which he is."

with future residence in the nascent city of Victoria. On November 30, 1847, he was consecrated at Oregon City by his new metropolitan. He then passed into Canada and, after some time spent in waiting for the end of the revolution of 1848, he proceeded as far as Europe, with the object of getting the means of organizing a diocese in a region which was as yet but a howling wilderness, his only diocesans being badly demoralized savages, with a few whites of various nationalities, too often the scum of their own countries, grouped in a single attempt at a settlement.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rev. Demers". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

REV. MR. DEMERS' SIGNATURE.

Seldom, if ever, has any local Church been founded under more distressing circumstances. When Bishop Demers went first to Victoria, in his new capacity, he had not as much as one priest at his disposal. When he returned thither in 1851 after his voyage to Europe, he discovered that one had been there whom he cordially wished had never left his native country. In his inexperience and for the lack of some one to counsel him, that priest had baptized over four thousand Indians, and married as many of them as must receive the Church's blessing on their union, after only eight days of instruction and probation. The result of that lamentable haste was

that the natives were then in an infinitely sadder plight than before they had seen a minister of religion. They knew that they had received "God's water," and now felt secure. Many had taken back their plural wives and returned to their superstitious practices.

Now, as the good bishop expressed it in a letter of October 26, 1852, "those Indians are so brutish, so coarse and so sensual that we must first make men out of them, before we think of converting them into Christians." That ill-advised missionary had lived nine months in the midst of the Cowichan tribe, but had taken his departure therefrom prior to the bishop coming to take possession of his See.

This he did on September 5, 1851. That ceremony had few parallels in the history of the episcopate. "Why were you not there," he wrote afterwards to one of his friends, "to witness a spectacle which would have been so novel to you! You would have marvelled, and perhaps been edified, at contemplating the Bishop of Vancouver Island kneeling on the trunk of an old tree which the waves had rolled ashore, and taking possession of that heathen land which the successor of Peter has entrusted to him! That ceremony could not take place in my cathedral, and you guess why: the lumber which is to serve in its construction is still growing in the forest."²⁸

The new prelate had then for his entire clergy three priests and a subdeacon. By the end of 1853

²⁸Victoria, 2nd Nov., 1852.

he had as yet neither home, nor even a modest chapel to use as a cathedral. On the other hand, the Hudson's Bay Company, on which he had counted, refused him aid of any kind.^o

Yet even greater trials were in store for him. Another of his priests, a native of Belgium, proved unfaithful to his clerical vows and unworthy of his high calling, thereby giving scandal which did infinite harm to the Indians and the cosmopolitan throng which then formed the town of Victoria. He had to be sent back to his monastery in Gand, and Demers was left to weep over the ruins accumulated by him who should have furnished his share in the edification of God's Church.

However, even then a ray of light pierced the gloom which encircled the disconsolate pastor by the Pacific. On September 5, 1847, four Oblate fathers, accompanied by two brothers, had arrived at Walla Walla, within what is now the State of Washington, and had ever since laboured among the various tribes of that territory and what we now call Oregon. Demers valued them highly as Indian missionaries. He had therefore asked for some of them of their Founder and Superior-General. "Ever since I have been here I have not ceased to beg for some, and I am told from Marseilles that there are

^o "Against my expectations, the Company refuses me all help; no more any passages on the vessels or with the caravans going to the interior of the country, as formerly; no more any support from the Fort [Victoria] . . . the land sells at one pound per acre." From a letter by Bishop Demers; Victoria, 26th Oct., 1852.

elsewhere more pressing needs," he writes to the Archbishop of Quebec, adding immediately: "However, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate have accepted my mission;¹⁰ I shall shift on them the burden of the same, and it is in that sense that I am going to write to Propaganda. The so well-disposed tribes of New Caledonia clamour for missionaries; the Bishop* of Marseilles knows it: it is enough for me."¹¹

The Bishop of Vancouver had to wait some time before he could see the realization of his plans concerning the advent in his diocese of Oblate missionaries. In the meantime he worked as best he could, aided by a few Canadian priests, to promote the spiritual welfare of the natives and others. He was indeed well qualified to instruct his clergy as to the line of conduct they should follow in their relations with the aborigines. In spite of his innate meekness, his tact and consequent influence were such that the wildest tribes learned to regard him with feelings of awe. He had already made the acquaintance of the terrible Yookltas, the Vikings of the North Pacific, dreaded by all the coast tribes, especially those of the Lower Fraser, as their worst enemies. He baptized the son of their chief, and it is on record that, like another Rollo, the savage potentate, seeing in the missionary a being partaking more or less of the supernatural, did not dare approach him except on bended knees, and trembling all over his body.

¹⁰That is, "the Indian missions to be established within my diocese."

¹¹To Mgr. Turgeon, Archbishop of Quebec; Victoria, 26th Oct., 1852.

The mysterious power which Demers wielded was, however, eventually the source of trouble and embarrassment to its possessor. For example, one of the chiefs that frequented Fort Langley got it into his head to hear confessions, thinking that he would by this means share the consideration which this ministry ensured to the missionary. "Since the priest does it, there can be no wrong in imitating him," reasoned the child of the forest.

To this epoch must be referred an incident which is a good illustration of the civilizing power of the Catholic religion over the most uncouth natures. Mr. Matthew Macfie has the following in his book on "Vancouver Island and British Columbia":

"In regard to the sign of the cross, to which so much importance is attached in the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church, the bishop of that faith in the diocese of Vancouver Island related to me a touching incident. When the Right Reverend Father first administered Christian ordinances to the Indians at the mouth of the Fraser, they were at variance with the Nanaimo tribe. 'The man of prayer,' as they termed the bishop, had occasion, about the time referred to, to visit the latter place in his episcopal tour after leaving the Fraser. Those from whom he had recently parted felt so edified by his counsels that they determined, at all hazards, to attempt following him. From some cause, however, they missed him; and as their canoes approached Nanaimo, to their dismay they beheld their foes ranged on the beach, prepared to fire upon them.

"For some time they kept at a safe distance, and held a council among themselves. The conclusion arrived at by them was as interesting as it was pacific. They argued that if the enemy was faithful to the instructions of 'the man of prayer' they would understand the sign of the cross, return it, and allow them to land in peace. They accordingly stood up and crossed themselves, at which signal the muskets of the Nanaimo men were laid aside, and a cordial welcome extended by them to their Christian brethren.

"It was stated to me, on trustworthy authority, that in consequence of Bishop Hills, of the English Church, when travelling in British Columbia, forbidding the Indians this mode of salutation, he was subjected to some disappointment and mortification. During one of his visits to that colony they mistook him for a Roman Catholic priest—the only description of missionary they had known up to that period—and adopted the sign of Christian freemasonry which has been alluded to. Mothers brought their infants to be baptized by him. But on discovering the Protestant bishop's opposition to their accustomed religious forms, they declined to receive the virtue of his episcopal manipulations, and withdrew from him as a dangerous heretic!"¹²

The episcopal tour referred to by Macfie took place in the spring of 1855. Its itinerary was along the eastern coast of Vancouver Island. Bishop Demers

¹²*Op. cit.*, pp. 474, 475.

then immensely impressed his primitive flock with his "long hat" and his "crooked staff," as they called his mitre and crozier. His exhortations were fruitful of good, and even the unruly Yookltas consented to bury the hatchet in order to join their hereditary foes in the exercises of our holy religion. He did indeed experience some difficulty on the question of monogamy; but he usually prevailed against the dictates of the corrupt nature of his flock, especially the chiefs, some of whom objected that "abundance had departed from their homes with the outgoing of their plural wives."¹³

At last, it became possible for the Oblates to undertake an establishment in the diocese of Vancouver Island. Their first station was at Esquimalt, a fine harbour near Victoria, where a house and a modest church were built in 1857-58.¹⁴ The new post then became the official residence of Rev. L. J. D'Herbomez, the vicar of the Oblate missions on the Pacific. Thence he directed the establishments already existing in what was then called Oregon, as well as those which were afterwards founded on the island and mainland of British Columbia.

But it was felt that but little good could be accomplished among the natives who were in contact with the whites, as the lawless conduct of the latter was a constant stumbling-block to the aborigines. The

¹³Bishop Demers; Victoria, 21st Jan., 1856.

¹⁴It is said that from 1849 to the beginning of 1852, one of them, hailing from Olympia, resided chiefly at Fort Victoria (Begg, "History of British Columbia," p. 478. Toronto, 1894).

newly discovered gold mines on the mainland brought to the doors of the bishop a wave of humanity which, for that and other reasons, claimed his attention. Unable to exercise an appreciable influence on the older newcomers, Mgr. Demers directed his efforts to the youth among them. In 1858 he went again to Canada, whence he returned, June 5, 1859, with four Sisters of St. Ann, an Institute then lately founded in the province of Quebec. These were Sisters Mary of the Sacred Heart (in the world Salomé Valois), Mary Angèle (Angèle Gauthier), M. Luména (Virginie Brasseur), and M. of the Conception (Mary Lane).

These courageous ladies immediately established at Victoria a school for the daughters of the whites, a measure which the bishop had rendered more easy of execution by previously securing six city lots, on which he likewise built his house and a cathedral.

With the prelate came also from Canada a kindly priest who was to pass over forty years in the land of his adoption, chiefly as chaplain to the nuns, and pastor of Quamichan, an Indian village to which was in time added the care of the Catholic whites settled in the neighbourhood. This was the Rev. Pierre Rondeau, a native of Berthier, in Lower Canada, where he was born July 19, 1824. He had been ordained at Montreal on August 30, 1857.

As to the Oblates, they watched at Esquimalt over the spiritual interests of the Irish sailors, who were fairly numerous on the British vessels that

called at that port. Then they turned their attention to the natives of the island. The first of their missionaries to visit and endeavour to reform them was Rev. Casimir Chirouse, one of the four Oblate priests who had reached Oregon in 1847.¹⁵ In a preliminary visit made in May, 1859, Father Chirouse baptized about four hundred children and induced over two thousand adults publicly to renounce gambling, conjuring and murdering. So successful was his preaching and so sincere were the Indians in their promises, that they loaded his canoe with the paraphernalia of the medicine-man, or conjurer, as well as with knives, gambling discs and similar accessories to sin.

The disastrous results of haste and undue indulgence had been but too glaring in former years, and the Oblates of the Pacific coast were averse to admitting into the Church Indians that would not break from all the practices which, directly or indirectly, recalled the dominion of Satan over them.

Though he had as yet but two secular priests in his diocese, the Bishop of Vancouver Island was constantly thinking of the far-off Indians of the mainland, so many of whom he had himself visited during the first years of his apostolate. So did Father D'Herbomez, the superior of the Oblates. Therefore, the latter sent inland Father Charles M. Pandosy to pave the way for the founding of an

¹⁵These pioneers were Fathers Ricard, Chirouse, Pandosy and Blanchet—the latter still unordained—with Bro. Janin.

establishment beyond the Hope Mountains. With the same end in view, Father Pierre Richard, accompanied by Bro. Surel, repaired to Fort Hope, on the Fraser, in August, 1859, and, having procured horses for their supplies and outfit at Kamloops, crossed the mountains and joined Father Pandosy. Thus was founded, October 8, 1859, the mission of the Immaculate Conception, on the eastern shore of Lake Okanagan.

To fill the vacancies caused on Vancouver Island by this foundation, there arrived on December 12th of the same year, two young Oblate priests from France, Revs. Pierre P. Durieu and Léon Fouquet, who were to prove perhaps the two most efficient Oblate missionaries to the Indians of the Pacific. Father Fouquet made his first campaign in the company of Father Chirouse, leaving Victoria on the Wednesday after Easter, 1860, for a trip of over three months' duration among the natives of the island. Their departure produced something of a sensation among the whites of the capital, as the Indians they proposed to visit were noted for their barbarity.

But new fields were calling for other labourers. In the southeastern corner of the province, the Jesuits stationed in what is now the State of Washington were evangelizing the Kootenay Indians, with what results may be gathered from the following: "Mr. Brazeau assured me that these Indians were now really good Christians, truthful,

brave and moral, and so honest that if they find even the smallest thing, such as a pocket knife or a piece of tobacco, they will bring it to the camp of the probable loser and cry it up and down till he is discovered."

This is from Lord Southesk's work on "Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains."¹⁶ The noble author then adds: "Mr. Brazeau considers that, to the west of the mountains, the Roman Catholics have wrought a great work of reformation among the natives."

The mainland, of which the importance had been revealed by the rich gold deposits of the northern interior, had just been constituted a distinct colony, with New Westminster as its capital. The vicar of the Oblate missions withdrew his subjects from the diocese of Nesqually, whose Ordinary¹⁷ wanted to enforce on them views incompatible with their calling. Father Fouquet was then sent to establish in the city in formation near the Fraser delta what has developed into the most important house of St. Charles (September 13, 1860).

Among the evangelical workers whom the abandonment of the Nesqually missions rendered available were Fathers Jayol and Grandidier, the latter a new recruit, the former an Oblate who had made his novitiate in the Oregon missions, after having

¹⁶P. 154.

¹⁷Mgr. A. Magloire Blanchet, a brother to the archbishop of the same name. The diocese of Nesqually is now that of Seattle.

served some time there as secular priest.¹⁸ Father Jayol was stationed among the Sanich Indians, on Vancouver Island, and, in the beginning of December, 1860, Bro. Blanchet who, owing to a hunting accident,¹⁹ had now renounced the idea of being raised to the priesthood, went to help him erect some sort of shelter, pending the building of a more substantial residence, should the necessity for a permanent mission become evident.

Writing of the natives already evangelized by the present bishop of the diocese, Father D'Herbomez remarks in his correspondence that, in spite of the fact that ten years had elapsed since Mr. Demers' passage among them, "in order to remember that auspicious date, they had adopted the plan of marking ever day and week by making a knot daily or weekly on a string, which was then some one hundred yards long."²⁰

As Indian missions were long paramount, and have remained quite important, in the Pacific province, it may not be amiss to introduce the reader to the ceremonial followed, from the beginning, in connection with the reception of the missionary by the various native villages.

¹⁸He had left France with Archbishop Blanchet and quite a numerous apostolic band on Feb. 22nd, 1847, and reached the mouth of the Columbia in a sailing ship on Aug. 13th of the same year. He was ordained priest on the fourth Sunday of the following September.

¹⁹While hunting ducks for the sustenance of the fathers and others, he accidentally shot off one of his fingers, and, in his humility, he considered himself thereby debarred from the service of the altars until his superiors convinced him that he must be ordained.

²⁰To Bishop de Mazenod; St. Joseph of Esquimalt, 15th Feb., 1861.

In the eyes of the aborigines, the priest was above all the "man of God," a being quite apart in creation, upon whom too much honour could scarcely be lavished. As soon as his canoe, manned by a crew hailing from the last village visited, was in sight, a volley of musketry saluted the temperance flag which floated to the wind over the frail skiff. Then the men on shore separated from the women and, forming lines distinct from theirs in front of the village, received a hearty handshake from the missionary, after each person had blessed himself with a generously proportioned sign of the cross. As he passed along, the priest had to be very careful lest he should forget even the smallest babe in the distribution of his fatherly attentions.

Then the chief welcomed the envoy from Heaven in the name of his people, and the missionary reciprocated by telling the villagers of his happiness in meeting his children, and delicately hinted at the great expectations he entertained with regard to their docility to the voice of God, whose instrument he was to be among them.

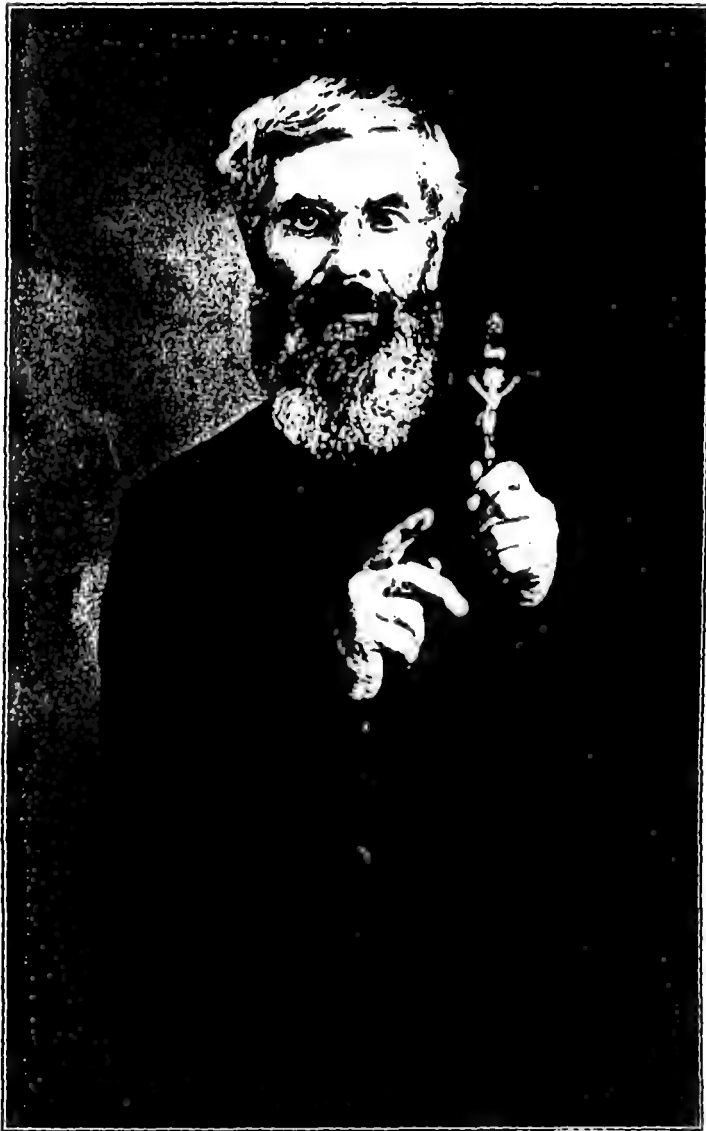
Sadly did the poor Indians stand in need of religious ministrations, especially after their first contact with the unscrupulous whites, as a rule single men of the coarsest description, who abounded in their midst in the early sixties. One of the pioneer priests thus describes the condition of the natives when he first met them:

"An immorality which would have put to blush

Sodom and Gomorrha, pagan Rome and Turkish Constantinople had spread among them the most horrible corruption. The unfortunates had learned to add to their coarse vices the foul habits which accompany the scum of a degraded civilization. In spite of the laws of the country, conscienceless men revelled in an infamous traffic of poisons which they called liquors: alcohol with a mixture of camphor and tobacco juice. At that time drunk Indians were to be seen everywhere. From my experience of five or six months, I do not think that out of a thousand a hundred could be found who were not used to drink to excess. Many there were who were never sober. One might have seen them in groups around, or even among, the whites, fighting and killing one another, while they howled like wild beasts. In one night two were killed in New Westminster. On the preceding Sunday I had separated and dispersed them; on that day we were absent. In their camps, where nothing could be apprehended from the whites, it was still more horrible. The sight was not unusual of relatives and even brothers fighting and killing one another. Nay, drunken fathers have been known to stab their own inoffensive children."²¹

This was indeed but little encouraging. Nevertheless the missionaries set to work with a will, combatting with all their might the twin vices of debauchery and intemperance. And not without suc-

²¹Father Fouquet to Father Tempier; New Westminster, 8th June, 1863.



FATHER FOUQUET, O.M.I.



cess; for, as early as May 22, 1861, Father Charles Grandidier was writing: "Governor Douglas did me the honour of a visit a few days ago. He told me that the Indians have never been so sober, and that he was very pleased with the change."²²

This was written from Fort Hope, on the Fraser. That the results of the priests' efforts were not ephemeral is proved by the fact that two years afterwards the *British Columbian*, a New Westminster paper, had the following in the course of a corre-

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Fouquet', with a stylized, flowing script.

FATHER FOUQUET'S SIGNATURE.

spondence from Yale, only a few miles above Fort Hope: "And here may be observed the happy fruits of the labours of the Romish missionaries, not only in the cleanliness and comfort observable [among the Indians], but in the marked abstinence from drink and other disorderly conduct."²³

Moreover, immoral unions between whites and Indian women were discountenanced, and it began to be said that "the squaws are all leaving the white men, and there is the greatest excitement."²⁴

Still more typical of the transformation wrought among the Indians by the handful of French priests

²²*Missions des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, vol. III., p. 205.

²³June 3rd, 1863.

²⁴Fouquet to Tempier, June 8th, 1863.

in the province is a letter which appeared in the *British Colonist*, a newspaper published in Victoria. The writer alludes, in the opening sentences, to the Anglican bishop, whose diocese had an endowment of £25,000:

"After so much has been said by a distinguished ecclesiastic calculated to mislead the enlightened public of Great Britain as to the influence of the Catholic religion upon our aboriginal population, I am compelled, however reluctantly, to make a plain statement of facts.

"I reside in the above district [Cowichan] in the midst of about 2,000 Indians who, eighteen months ago, carried on a system of drunkenness and murder too horrible to relate. At this date they may be said to be a reclaimed people. Drink is forbidden by them, and a penalty attached to drunkenness by order of their chiefs. Consequently, other crimes are of rare occurrence. And to what is all this owing? To the honest and persevering labours of a poor Catholic priest who receives no salary, and is fed by the Indians as far as their means will enable them. Within eighteen months he has baptized upwards of 250 children and 50 adults who can repeat the catechism in their own language. Besides cutting timber, they have subscribed their dollars to build a substantial church, capable of containing 400 people, and it is, every Sabbath, full to overflowing. I have seen hundreds standing in the rain to catch a sound of the priest's exhortation. They are

now collecting funds to furnish their church and make it like the white man's place of worship. I have seen over 900 clean-washed, well-dressed Indians at mass in one of their own lodges."

Then the correspondent adds, not without a touch of irony:

"Though trained in the English national Church myself, may I ask the Lord Bishop, where in all civilized England with its grand cathedrals and fat, rosy-cheeked, spiritual peers and clergy; where in British Columbia or Vancouver Island blessed with large episcopal endowments; where in the *civilized* world, can you find 900 out of 2,000 souls so moral and attentive to their religious duties as these so-called heathens? In these respects, Mr. Editor, I wish we had many more such heathens. I think, seriously, when my funds increase, of sending a detachment of them as missionaries to the 200,000 thieves of religious England. There are friends in Saanich prepared to give facts equally striking and delightful in regard to the mighty change wrought by Catholics in that region."²⁵

²⁵*The British Colonist*, March 26th, 1861.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE FIRST BISHOP OF THE MAINLAND.

1861-1867.

These were indeed glorious results. But it would scarcely be possible to give an idea of the extraordinary zeal, of the dogged perseverance and unending vigilance which alone could secure them. The superiors of the Oblate missionaries on the Pacific themselves more than once gave expression to the opinion that their herculean labours there seemed beyond human endurance.

The year 1861 was an exceptionally important one in their annals. In the course of the same the Oblates built two chapels at Esquimalt, a house for the priest at Sanich, three churches in other Indian villages, two chapels at New Westminster, one for the natives, the other for the whites, among whom were counted many of the soldiers then in garrison in the incipient town, as well as a presbytery and a hospital in the same locality. At Fort Hope they erected a chapel and a house for the missionary, while on Lake Okanagan they were busy putting up the various buildings that go to make a well-organized mission.

Upwards of twelve thousand Indians were visited and catechized during the same year, while appre-

ciably good results followed the missionary's ministry among the whites. Thus in a village which counted but sixty Catholics of that race, nine who had practically forgotten the Church of their first communion were reconciled with their Creator and became practical Christians. Among the Indians eighteen hundred men out of two thousand took the pledge in a single mission, and over sixteen hundred faithfully kept it.

These victories, bloodless though they were, cost infinite pains and a constant watchfulness on the part of the priests, against whom the worst passions of unprincipled whites were also leagued. The saloon keepers soon complained of what they called the undue interference of foreigners with their licensed trade. At Fort Hope Father Grandidier was even publicly insulted, and almost assaulted, by them. As the good priest declined to prosecute his aggressors, the well-thinking among the whites felt all the more indignant at the outrage. Nay, His Excellency the Governor, accompanied by Chief Justice Begbie and Judge P. O'Reilly, called on him to personally congratulate him on the results of his campaign on behalf of temperance and civilization.

Father Grandidier had made in the same year (1861) a long and fatiguing journey throughout the very interior of British Columbia in the interests of the souls of whites and reds alike, going as far north as the far-famed Caribou mines. Leaving Fort Hope on July 3rd, he proceeded by way of Fort Douglas

and Lillooet. At the former place, which had previously received Father Durieu with enthusiasm, Grandidier was grieved to feel the blasting effects of heresy. Protestant ministers had shortly before passed there, and as a result the natives now manifested a degree of distrust and even hostility which prevented him from baptizing some of the infants.

Nevertheless he preached, exhorted and taught as best he could under the circumstances, a programme which he religiously followed in all the localities he afterwards visited. Let us hasten to add that the interference of the preachers at Douglas and Lillooet ultimately proved futile. There is not a single Protestant Indian in those quarters.

So far the journey had been on foot, and the wayfarer had to pack his impedimenta under the rays of a Senegalian sun. Farther north he got a horse which took him as far as Keithley Creek, Antler Creek and Williams Creek, the principal centres in the gold-bearing region. There he endeavoured to do as much good as possible under the circumstances to the souls of the miners, an undertaking fraught with innumerable difficulties. As usual, the Irish showed by their proverbial generosity their appreciation of his services.

On his way back, he approached the Alexandria Indians, who were delighted to see a priest after an interim of some fourteen years. But they loudly manifested their disappointment and openly gave vent to feelings of discouragement when they were

told that the missionary could not permanently remain among them.

As to his superior, Father D'Herbomez, he had been convoked to the Oblate Chapter that was to elect a successor to the Founder of his Institute. He therefore crossed the ocean in the summer of 1861, leaving young Father Fouquet in charge of his missions on the Pacific.

The pro-vicar understood, in common with his older brothers in the country, that no results, however satisfactory, would warrant the missionaries relaxing their exertions in the apostolic field. He knew well, and experience was amply to demonstrate, that the very first fruits of priestly zeal must be taken at a discount when it is a question of American Indians, because much of their first fervour is usually attributable to enthusiasm consequent on novelty. The labourers in the Lord's vineyard must therefore multiply themselves, and add to their original stations if the flame of the first fire is to be kept burning.

This they did by establishing, always in the course of 1861, some thirty-five miles about New Westminster, St. Mary's Mission, which was to become the great centre of missionary activities among the natives of the Lower Fraser valley, upon whom it was forever to leave the impress of its influence through the industrial school which was soon (1863) to shine as its chief ornament.

To fill up the gaps caused by this foundation in

the personnel of the Oblates, the vicar of missions returned from Europe in 1862 with three excellent religious: Fathers Baudre, Le Jacq and Gendre. The two last named, especially Father Le Jacq, were to become great luminaries among the natives of British Columbia. Father Gendre, the kind and jovial friend of the Indian, was not, alas! destined to a long career as a missionary; but the few years that Providence was to grant him were spent in unbounded devotion to the interests of his charge.

The first post he filled previous to consecrating himself to the education of the native youth at St. Mary's Mission, was that of New Westminster. Temporarily alone there, he shortly afterwards thus described his position:

"How queer were to me those few days passed in my hermitage! I formed a perfect community, remarkable for its orderly conduct. When I was cooking, kneading my dough, or baking it on the sheet-iron of my little stove, the entire community assisted at the operations. The point of the Rule which I observed the best, after brotherly love, was the prescription of silence. Always strict silence, except when, annoyed by the racket made by the rats, I launched after them some French anathema which the native rodents did not understand."

While these precious recruits were giving the first-fruits of their zeal to the Indians of the mainland, a no less valuable addition accrued to the island

Letter dated Feb. 16th, 1863.

clergy in the person of a French priest, the Rev. Joseph Marie Mandart, a native of Vannes, Brittany, who arrived at Victoria in the spring of 1862. That young ecclesiastic was to prove one of the most persevering of the secular priests within what is now British Columbia. In fact, he devoted his entire life to the service of the natives, and the cradle of his missionary career was, long afterwards, to become his last resting place. He was, in course of time, the first priest to visit Alaska from the coast after the transfer of that territory to the United States (1867).

Meantime, as if these apostolic men had been idle in the midst of their neophytes, the ranks of the white population were being swollen by numerous arrivals of people fevered with the passion for gold. In 1862 eight or ten thousand strangers made their way to British Columbia, who generally gave but few consolations to the ministers of the Gospel, in spite of the fact that the latter did not hesitate to follow them out to the wilderness of the northern mountains. We have already mentioned Grandi-dier's arduous trip of 1861; Bishop Demers repaired himself to Caribou in the course of 1863.

This invasion of the white race was decidedly detrimental to the welfare of the natives. Apart from the deleterious influences it exercised on their morals, it brought from California the scourge of smallpox, which rapidly spread among them and as speedily thinned their ranks. The havoc

played by the dread disease could scarcely be imagined by such as are not familiar with the absolute disregard of the Indians for the most elementary hygienic precautions in cases of sickness.²

The missionaries had then to turn surgeons and physicians. Father Pandosy vaccinated several thousand Indians; Father Fouquet rendered the same service to at least eight thousand, while Fathers Chirouse and Durieu similarly operated on about as many between themselves.

The calamity which rendered this measure necessary did not prevent the opening, in 1863, of a new mission in the vicinity of Fort Rupert, on a small island near the northwest coast of Vancouver Island. To the new post St. Michael was given for patron. Let us say once for all that the Indians for whose benefit it was intended never appreciated to any extent the blessing that was at their door. Grossly immoral, jealously conservative of their heathenish rites and traditions, and devoid of any religious aspirations, except such as manifest themselves by the rattling of the medicine-man, the Kwakwintl, in spite of the superhuman efforts of Fathers Fouquet, Durieu and Le Jacq—incontestably the best missionaries on the Pacific—repaid their benefactors by deriding them and their ministry, or at least by showing the greatest indifference towards the ob-

²When the writer reached Victoria in July, 1880, he was assured by the priests that, but a few years before, the ground of the surrounding woods was still white with the blanched bones of the victims of smallpox.

ject of their mission, until, after years of patient toil, the worthy priests had to leave them to their fate.

In the southern extremity of the same island diocese more consoling events were taking place, though the labours of bishop and priests in Victoria itself scarcely met with all the success they deserved. The Sisters of St. Ann were doing wonders with their convent school, which in 1863 counted already about one hundred pupils of all denominations.

Mgr. Demers had also started a school for boys in his episcopal city. This was soon handed over to the Oblates, who converted it into a college, calling it St. Louis College in honour of their superior, Rev. Louis D'Herbomez. For this a brick building 45 by 30, two stories high, was erected, whose cornerstone was blessed August 25, 1863. The staff of the new institution was composed of Father Baudre, president; with the scholastic Bro. McGuckin and the lay Bros. Allen and McStay, as professors.

Rev. James M. McGuckin was ordained soon after (November 1, 1863), and, owing to his nationality and consequent familiarity with English, he immediately became a most useful subject.

Slightly over two weeks later another precious recruit was arriving (November 19, 1863) at Victoria. This was a young priest, delicate in health but strong in mind, the Rev. Charles Joseph Seghers, who came from Gand, where he was born on December 26, 1839. From the start he impressed favorably the Bishop of Vancouver Island, who

almost immediately entrusted him with the administration of the finances of his diocese.

But an event of much greater importance, a measure which was to be the turning point in the history of the Pacific coast missions, the division of Bishop Demers' diocese, was soon to become an accomplished fact. Before we part with this pioneer epoch let us briefly survey the state of the Church in British Columbia at the close of 1863.

We see the saintly Bishop Demers at Victoria, struggling with one or two secular priests against the religious apathy, if not hostility, of the whites among his diocesans, while a few Oblates are in charge of St. Louis College. Sanich and Cowichan are other posts whence the spiritual needs of the local and surrounding Indians are attended to. A few miles from Victoria (as that town then stood) is Esquimalt, the headquarters of the Oblate vicar, where at least one confrère and a brother of the same Order usually keep him company, when they do not minister to the Catholic sailors and others near by. At the opposite end of the same island is St. Michael's Mission, while on the mainland we find the promising missionary stations of St. Charles, at New Westminster; St. Mary's, further up the Fraser, and the Immaculate Conception, on Lake Okanagan.

The Oblates of these various posts, the true pioneers and first successful missionaries to the Indians of the Pacific, are: Fathers D'Herbomez, vicar of

missions; Chirouse, Pandosy, Richard, Durieu, Fouquet, Grandidier, Jayol, Le Jacq, Gendre, Baudre and McGuckin. They are aided with regard to material concerns by Bros. Janin, Surel, Vernet, Allen and McStay. A few other priests were at the two establishments within Mgr. F. N. Blanchet's archdiocese still in the hands of the Oblates.

The Indians whose spiritual interests were the object of the solicitude of most of these missionaries, belonged to many tribes, all of which may be reduced to six stocks or primary families. Their numbers are to-day greatly diminished; yet all of these divisions are still extant as so many ethnic entities. The six aboriginal stocks are, from north to south: the Déné, the Tsimpsian, the Haida, the Kwakwiutl, the Salish and the Kootenay. With the exception of the latter, each of these groups is subdivided into several tribes, with as many dialects which differ from one another, though they are clearly related in terminology or structure. Their manners and customs are distinct, and at times their ethnic characteristics and physiological peculiarities are almost the opposite of those of other congeneric divisions.

The British Columbia Kootenays are settled within the valleys of the Upper Columbia and of the river called after them. They number barely 590, and are remarkable for their manliness, stolidity and pure morals.

The Salish stock is numerically the most import-

ant of the province, its territory bordering on that of the Kootenays, and extending from 52° 30' latitude to the American boundary and beyond. It also includes the littoral of Dean Inlet, on the mainland, and most of the eastern half of Vancouver Island. Within the provincial limits, this family is divided into seven tribes, each of which boasts a more or less great number of villages with large communal houses inhabited by several related families. The best known are the Shushwaps, located along part of both Thompson rivers and the Fraser from 51° to 52° 30'; the Stalos, on the Lower Fraser, from Yale to the sea, and the Sishalhs (or Sechelts), some fifty miles north on the coast. The British Columbia Salish are at least 11,000 at the present day.

Within the same province the Dénés are divided into five tribes, prominent among which are the Carriers evangelized by Mr. Demers. They form an aggregate of some 2,500 souls.

Immediately to the west thereof are the Tsimp-sians (about 5,000) who, in common with the Kwak-wiutl of the mainland and island coasts (perhaps 1,900) and the Haidas of Queen Charlotte Islands (2,600) are essentially maritime aborigines. They dwell on the Skeena and the Nass, as well as on the intervening mainland coast. Most of the representatives of these north Pacific families are steeped in immorality, and therefore look askance at the restraints on the passions imposed by the Catholic Church.

We must repeat that the above are the figures for the present population. Especially as regards the maritime tribes, which were formerly very populous, they do not begin to represent the real numbers of the British Columbia Indians at the time of which we write.

We have already seen Protestant witnesses testifying to the remarkable transformation wrought among the aborigines of the southern half of the province. Before we proceed with our narrative, it will not be amiss to add to those precious testimonies the discreet note of a fair-minded minister, who became author after a sojourn of a few years on the Pacific. We read in Macfie's work already referred to:

"Arriving at Cowitchin one summer evening, about eight o'clock, in a canoe, after a long day's paddling, I heard the sound of chanting from the native church, which was erected and supplied with altar furniture chiefly, if not entirely, at the expense of the Indians. It was a log structure, about 50 by 20 feet, and on a high situation. At some distance from it, in front, a huge wooden Latin cross stood in the ground, that sacred emblem being usually found in connection with Catholic mission stations. On entering the church I observed a *frère* engaged in teaching some Indian lads hymns used in devotional exercises, which they sang with taste and vigour. On retiring they were careful to sign themselves with the cross. I visited the priest, who lived

in a humble shanty adjoining the church, and I could not fail to be struck at the exemplary self-forgetfulness he manifested in his arduous work. He had lived there for some years before white men settled in the locality; and notwithstanding the utter absence of comforts, and even scantiness of necessaries that marked his lot, he seemed cheerful and contented. There was no disposition shown by him to put a brighter face on the results of his efforts than facts would justify. Indeed, for whatever favourable report I received, I was indebted to disinterested witnesses of his labours. I learned that on Sundays hundreds of natives attended religious services; that monogamy was generally enforced by him with success, and that in many other respects the morals of the people were correct. One case was told me of illicit whisky-dealers, who, attempting to land alcohol from their sloops, were driven off and their casks rolled into the sea. I fear we should look in vain for a display of similar zeal for the cause of morality and temperance in a white community of the same extent."⁸

Despite the success of the Catholic priests among the majority of the natives, numerous Protestant preachers of all sects were then waging a relentless war of opposition to their designs. We are forced to say that they too often made up for their failures by circulating unfounded assertions concerning the standing of the "foreign priests" and the fate that

⁸"Vancouver Island and British Columbia," pp. 473, 474.

was in store for their followers. It so happened, however, that, in May, 1864, Governor Sir James Douglas resolved to have a great celebration to commemorate the Queen's Birthday. Wishing to secure therefor as large a concourse of Indians as possible, he applied to their religious leaders, the despised French missionaries. As a consequence, Father Fouquet went down from St. Mary's Mission to New Westminster with a flotilla of six or seven hundred canoes, carrying some 3,500 natives, with sixty temperance flags—a red cross on a white field bordered in red, and the words, "Religion, Temperance, Civilization" in large golden letters. In front of the governor's residence a formal meeting of the tribes took place in presence of the whites of the town, who had not expected to witness such a vast and orderly assembly.

After a series of discourses, the representative of the Sovereign distributed gifts to all the chiefs, who were presented to him by their missionaries. Out of fifty-eight only one, with a dozen followers, belonged to the Protestant ministers. So that not only were the results of Catholic zeal thereby made patent to all, but the insidious talk of the priests' opponents was publicly refuted by the treatment granted to the Catholic Indians.

Every subsequent year this anniversary was made the occasion of similar festivities and consequent triumphs for the Catholic faith, practically till the time of the admission of the province (then a colony) into the Canadian Confederation.

But we must now come to the great event of 1864. The field entrusted to the care of Bishop Demers was evidently too large for any one man to cultivate. What was then called British Columbia, in contradistinction to Vancouver Island (which formed a separate colony), was therefore constituted into a vicariate-apostolic, with Father Louis Joseph D'Herbomez as first pastor.

This missionary, though of rather delicate health, had already shown his exceptional abilities in the government of men. Born at Brillon, in the diocese of Cambrai, France, on January 17, 1822, he was ordained on October 14, 1849, by Bishop de Mazenod, the Founder of the Oblate Institute. He came to the Oregon missions as early as 1850, by way of Cape Horn, and since the return to Europe of the superior of the Oblates on the Pacific, Father Ricard, he had represented there the General of his Order.

Preconised Bishop of Miletopolis on December 20, 1863, he could not be consecrated until the 9th of October of the following year. Archbishop Blanchet, of Oregon City, was the consecrating prelate, being assisted by Bishop Demers and Father Fouquet who, by special dispensation, acted as third bishop.

It was a great day for Victoria, where the ceremony took place, a day which had a sort of duplicate on October 16, 1864, when Bishop D'Herbomez took possession of his See at New Westminster.



RT. REV. L. J. D'HERBOMEZ, O.M.I.

First Vicar-Apostolic of the Mainland of B.C.



Father Fouquet had repeated that year the long journey to the Caribou mines and way-points already made by Father Grandidier and Bishop Demers. Leaving New Westminster June 11th, he visited in succession, but without very tangible results from a spiritual standpoint, the various mining camps; after which he directed his steps towards the land of the Chilcotin Indians who happened to be away in their mountain fastnesses.

+ Louis A. M. G.

BISHOP D'HERBOMEZ'S SIGNATURE.

Then, in conjunction with his brother priests, he continued to add the functions of surgeon to those of doctor of the soul. It is calculated that, in December, 1864, the Oblate missionaries must have vaccinated some fifteen or sixteen thousand Indians. Furthermore, as if to prove the variety of their gifts and the universality of their cares, one of them, Father Fouquet, published in the course of 1865 a pamphlet wherein he vindicated the rights of the Catholics to a Christian education.

Catholic charity manifested itself by two foundations in 1864 and 1865. On October 16th of the former year an orphan asylum was established at Cowichan by the Sisters of St. Ann, and on June 20th of the latter the same religious commenced work on a hospital at New Westminster.

When the winter of 1864-65 was over, Bishop

D'Herbomez undertook a series of journeys, the better to come in touch with his new flock and ascertain their needs. At the same time, Father Durieu was repairing to the uninviting mission of Fort Rupert, whose Indians were "very far from heaven," as Fouquet put it, and Father Gendre was proceeding to the Caribou district, in order to allow once more the gold miners an opportunity of fulfilling their religious duties.

In 1866, Bishop D'Herbomez, who had already visited the posts of the Lower Fraser, directed his steps towards Douglas and Lillooet, then Kamloops and Okanagan, where a number of French, German and English settlers profited by his ministrations. Meanwhile, Father Grandidier was again extending the same privilege to the miners of the Caribou gold fields.

In the autumn of 1865, there arrived from Ireland a young priest, Father Edward Horris, who, though not endowed with any specially brilliant qualities of the mind, was nevertheless destined to make his mark among the whites of the Lower Fraser, by his affability and devotion to duty. New Westminster was to be his headquarters, and he commenced his career there by teaching, with Bro. Allen, in St. Louis College, a newly established counterpart of the institution of the same name in Victoria.

Then, as the mainland was growing in importance, new plans for its evangelization were made, which involved a more numerous personnel. The

vicar-apostolic was therefore in the necessity of recalling the Oblates that still remained on Vancouver Island, with a view to concentrating their energies in the vast field specially entrusted to their zeal, viz.: all of the present province of British Columbia, without Vancouver Island. This comprised, in addition to the territory west of the Rocky Mountains, a large strip of land to the northeast of the same, now better known as the Peace River country, as well as the important group of the Queen Charlotte Islands.

By this measure, which was executed in the course of 1866, Bishop Demers' diocese was left entirely in the hands of secular priests.

These were never numerous; but those who remained long at their posts were so much the more deserving as no other ties than their zeal for the salvation of souls bound them to their uninviting ministry. We have already seen Rev. Mr. Rondeau early at Quamichan. At the time we have reached in our narrative (1867) Rev. J. J. Jonckau, a young Belgian priest, offered his services to the Bishop of Vancouver Island. To the time of his death, which occurred in 1888, he laboured faithfully in the field of the Pacific missions. Two years afterwards there came (October 19, 1869), another priest of the same nationality, the Rev. August Joseph Brabant, who was to do yeoman's service, mostly on the west coast of the island, as we shall presently see.

Meantime Rev. Ch. Seghers would sally out of

Victoria to minister to the natives of Nanaimo, Chemainus and other places on the Island. But his strength soon failed him. He became seriously ill, and was so debilitated by frequent and copious vomiting of blood that he had eventually to return to Europe at a time (October, 1869) when Bishop Demers, called to the Council of the Vatican, had planned to entrust him with the administration of his diocese.

CHAPTER XL.

EXTENSION IN THE NORTH OF THE MAINLAND.

1868-1875.

As these worthy missionaries vied with each other in their exertions on behalf of the natives and whites of Vancouver Island, the new pastor of the mainland was on the eve of undertaking a most important journey to the same end. The aborigines of New Caledonia, already brought to the knowledge of God by the visits of Demers and Nobili, had, for the lack of labourers, been left to themselves since 1847. Exactly twenty years after that date, one of their principal chiefs had come down to Quesnel, a trading village at the confluence of the river of the same name with the Fraser. Meeting there Father McGuckin, who had just founded (Máý, 1867), a new mission for the Shushwaps and whites at William's Lake, whence he also ministered to the spiritual needs of the Caribou miners, the Carrier chief had asked for a priest. In answer to that request, which was duly transmitted to Bishop D'Herbomez, His Lordship had promised to go north himself.

Accordingly, he set out on April 18, 1868, with Father Le Jacq, who was destined for the mission of William's Lake. This was to be a five-month journey.

At Fort Alexander, or Alexandria as the place was now more commonly known, the prelate took with him a young but intelligent Indian, to act as his interpreter throughout the district he was to visit. Arrived at Stony Creek, his party was received with enthusiasm, and the bishop's teaching did as much good as was possible after the demoralization wrought out by the miners that were flocking to the Omineca gold fields.

He soon had an example of the sordid ideas which commerce with the whites had engendered among the natives. At the close of the mission, he was asked \$10.00 for the loan of a canoe that was to take him up to Stuart Lake, the chief centre of their country. Mgr. D'Herbomez felt, or appeared, indignant.

"What!" he exclaimed, "I have travelled over five hundred miles to come and do you good, and you would treat me as you do the whites who come here simply to get gold! If I had to pay you for any service, I should be ashamed of you, and would not recognize you as my children."

The reprimand had the desired effect. Let us say here that one of the secrets of the Oblate fathers' success in the Pacific province has been their insistence on being treated as the representatives of God, who, while engaged in missionary work, must be served without any other remuneration than the satisfaction derived from the thought of helping in the salvation of souls. The Indian who does some-

thing for the sake of his religion takes an interest in that religion, and yields respect and obedience to its minister proportionately to the amount of generosity he manifests in the furthering of the same. He has, therefore, been sedulously taught to convey free of charge the missionary from his place to the next to be visited and to support him, when engaged on apostolic work in his village, as far as his meagre resources will allow.

After a retreat preached at Fraser Lake, Bishop D'Herbomez returned to Stony Creek, whence he proceeded to Stuart Lake. Arrived there on the Monday after Pentecost, he gave an eight days' mission, during which incalculable good was done. Then he made for Babine Lake, where he was received with more curiosity than real eagerness for spiritual benefit. The Indians had just commenced a series of festivities, accompanied by dancing and gambling, the perils of which he strove to impress on his hearers.

On his way back, the prelate passed through the Caribou gold mines, where his presence elicited unstinted praise in the local paper. He was treated with great generosity by the Irish and the French he met. He then went down, leaving the main road to repair to Okanagan mission, and repeated there his efforts on behalf of the spiritual welfare of his flock.

One of the results of that pastoral visitation was the settling of Father McGuckin at Richfield, Cari-

bou, whence he periodically visited the other mining centres.

We may also mention that, during the last part of the same, Mgr. D'Herbomez had had for a companion Very Rev. Father Charles Jolivet,¹ sent from Paris as special visitor to the missions of the Pacific. Jolivet first joined the prelate at William's Lake Mission, as the latter was returning from the north. Arrived at New Westminster, the visitor then preached a general retreat to a number of Oblate priests, after which he went to inspect St. Michael's Mission, near Fort Rupert, and satisfy himself of the accuracy of the unfavourable reports he had heard concerning that post.

Another result of the bishop's apostolic journey was the blessing of churches, in Caribou for the whites, at Clinton for whites and Indians, and at Quesnel, Alexandria, Soda Creek, Tlitenaiten and Pavillon, for the natives. The last of these churches was the fifty-fifth edifice he had opened to public worship within the four years that he had been entrusted with the care of the mainland.

This was indeed progress. William's Lake Mission was then (1868) in the charge of Father McGuckin; St. Mary's was governed by Father Durieu; the Immaculate Conception, or Lake Okanagan, was presided over by Father Pandosy; New Westminster had Father Horris for a parish priest, and

¹Afterwards Vicar-Apostolic of Natal, South Africa.

Father Fouquet was vainly battling against the indifference of the Kwakwiutl at St. Michael's.

On his return to New Westminster, Mgr. D'Herbomez was delighted to welcome, November 24, 1868, two new recruits for his missions in the persons of Fathers Marchal and Lamure. The latter was not destined to a long career on the banks of the Fraser. He had barely been two years there when, on December 17, 1870, he was carried away by a most unexpected accident. He was then stationed at St. Mary's Mission, a locality famous among the early missionaries for the poverty and discomfort its inmates had to endure. Under those circumstances, hunting partook more of the nature of unavoidable drudgery than of sport or recreation. Father Lamure was so engaged in the company of a lay brother who followed him through the bush, when a twig let off the cock of the latter's gun, whose contents lodged in the body of the hapless priest. He died a few hours later.

Leaving the blood-stained banks of the lower Fraser, we see, in the course of 1869, Father Le Jacq following in his bishop's footsteps, and wending his way north from William's Lake, where he was now stationed. He was welcomed by the Carriers; but the Babines made at first a visitation of measles the pretext for discontent, inasmuch as they attributed it to the machinations of the "French sorcerers," as their neighbours of Tsimpsian parentage called the missionaries. But the kindness and

persuasive powers of the good father soon explained away the difficulty.

At Fallen Rock (or *Rocher Déboulé*), on the Bulkley, he witnessed one of the great fairs annually held there. Hundreds, if not thousands, of dusky traders from the coast coming to a tribe which had so far proved rebellious to the voice of grace, had arrived to exchange the products of the white skippers and their own for the furs, dressed skins and other articles of the interior Indians.

These gatherings of alien hordes untamed by the influence of religion were at times fraught with danger for the peace of the tribes and the safety of individuals. Father Le Jacq was not long without having a practical illustration of this.

One day, his host asked him whether everyone was not bound to pay his debts.

"Certainly," answered the unsuspecting missionary.

Whereupon the Indian made for an Atna (or stranger of Tsimpsonian parentage).

"You owe me so many blankets," he said to him; "therefore, on the advice of the priest, I take this as a payment of the same."

And the Babine went off with the coveted goods he had forcibly snatched away from the Atna.

Furious at this interference, the stranger swore that he would be revenged on the white man, and it looked for a time as if the missionary's days were indeed numbered. For a time his life was in

danger; yet he managed to stay four weeks among those Indians, despite the fact that they were in too close contact with the Atnas to give him all the consolations to which other Dénés had accustomed him.

The following year (1870) it was Father McGuckin's turn. Ascending the Upper Fraser in a small canoe, he visited Fort George and Stuart Lake, reaching the latter place on June 3rd. Then he made for the haunts of the nomadic Sékanais, whom he found as good and moral Indians as they were ignorant of the white man's ways. Their congeners of Bear Lake likewise received the benefit of his visit, and, though tired out and even ailing, the missionary thence made for the Skeena River, across snow-capped mountains, where his diet consisted of marmot and dried salmon.

As these apostolic peregrinations were absorbing the time of choice missionaries in the north, important events were shaping themselves in the south. Bishops Demers and D'Herbomez had gone to Rome in order to attend the Vatican Council. The former could scarcely return therefrom. Broken down by his apostolic labours and the cares of his responsible position more than by the weight of years, he expired in his episcopal city on July 21, 1871.

A zealous missionary and a prelate meek and humble of heart, he was regretted alike by his flock, who had not always fully understood him, and by the Protestants, who had not spared their efforts to

thwart his plans. Without being a professional *littérateur*, Mgr. Demers was possessed of no mean literary attainments. He had compiled in the course of 1838 and 1839 a vocabulary of the Chinook jargon, a medley speech made up of badly pronounced French, English and various native words, with terms from the real Chinook language for a background. This curious mixture was then, and remained to our day, the almost universal means of communication between whites and Indians, as well as between heterogeneous tribes on the Pacific, practically from California to Alaska.

On the death of the first Bishop of Vancouver Island, Rev. Charles Seghers, who had returned with him from Europe, became the administrator of the diocese. The young priest was himself scarcely expected to live, though, as if through the direct intervention of Heaven, he soon after rallied, becoming physically as strong as he had been weak.

The Dénés of the northern Interior of British Columbia were again visited in 1872. While Father McGuckin was directing his steps towards the bunch-grass covered plateaus and valleys of the Chilcotin Indians, to the west of William's Lake Mission, Father Le Jacq was again repairing to the beautiful lakes and rivers by the banks of which lived the numerous Carrier and Babine bands, who now wondered why no permanent post was established in their midst by the missionaries. The presence of a resident priest had become, so much the

more necessary there as, consequent on the gold discoveries in the Omineca district, a few white men, generally not the best representatives of their race; were temporarily settling among them.

Father Le Jacq had then an illustration of the difficulties their presence was creating. Quite a series of questions were one day put to him, which had for object topics usually considered as alien to the native mental make-up.

"What is a judge?" asked the chief of Fond du Lac (Fraser Lake).

After the proper information had been vouchsafed, the Indian wanted to know what authority such an official had to condemn a man to death, and; above all, whether the person hanged by his order could go to heaven. Finally, he disembosomed himself of the object of his preoccupations by relating the following story:

One of the minor chiefs of the Babine tribe had bought a sack of flour of an American trader; but when the sack was opened in the presence of a crowd of Indians to whom its contents were to be distributed, it was found to contain nothing but ashes. Therefore, it was immediately returned by Choennih, the brother of Father Le Jacq's informant; but the trader would not take it back, pretending that they wanted to make him the victim of a bad joke. After two or three days' deliberations, the Indians came to the conclusion that, since a sack of flour had been paid for in good beaver skins, a good sack of flour

they must have. Choennih and another Babine then forcibly took from the store the equivalent of the petty chief's furs.

A few days afterwards, Judge O'Reilly happened to pass by the Babine village. The American laid a formal complaint before the magistrate, and as a result Choennih was arrested. As there was no proper interpreter to tell the Indians' version, O'Reilly condemned him to six months' imprisonment.

The Indian was sullenly following up the precipitous trail across the Babine mountains on his way to the place of confinement, pondering over the sort of justice that was meted out by the pale-faced strangers, when, having succeeded in disengaging his hands from the iron cuffs that bound them, he pounced upon the two whites who preceded him on the slope of a precipice, and, in less time than it takes to write it, he had hurled them to the bottom of the hill, an operation which was repeated in connection with the third man before he had time to recover from his surprise. Choennih was again a free man; but the whites being so incomprehensible in their administration of justice, would he not be hanged for his escape if caught again? If so, what of his future in the next world? Hence the chief's questions to Father Le Jacq.

For such and many other reasons, it was evident that the establishment of a mission was urgently demanded in the north. The Indians of the district

certainly deserved it. Even in the absence of a priest they endeavoured to conform their conduct to his teaching, faithfully keeping up the organization for the repression of vice established among them, observing the Lord's Day and the Church holidays, as well as the Friday abstinence, as if they had been Christians, and scarcely ever failing to say in common their morning and evening prayers.

Even the Journal of the traders at Fort St. James (Stuart Lake) is a witness to the fidelity of the natives to the chief observances of the Church of their choice. Here are two of its entries:

"Good Friday, April 15th, 1870—A collection of Indians from all quarters to hold out mass (!) till Easter Sunday. Singing and praying is now quite the order of the day in the church."

"Easter Sunday.—Holy ceremonies kept by the men and Indians."*

Therefore, Brother Georges Blanchet, who had concluded his ecclesiastical studies some twenty-five years before, was ordained priest in 1872, to serve as a socius to the superior of the new mission, Father Le Jacq, and both ~~went~~ ^{came} up to Stuart Lake in the spring of 1873 to establish the post which was thenceforth to bear the name of Our Lady of Good Hope. A short distance from Fort St. James, Father Blanchet put up a temporary house and commenced the construction of a church which was to become the pride of the North.

*That is, the white or halfbreed employees of the fort.

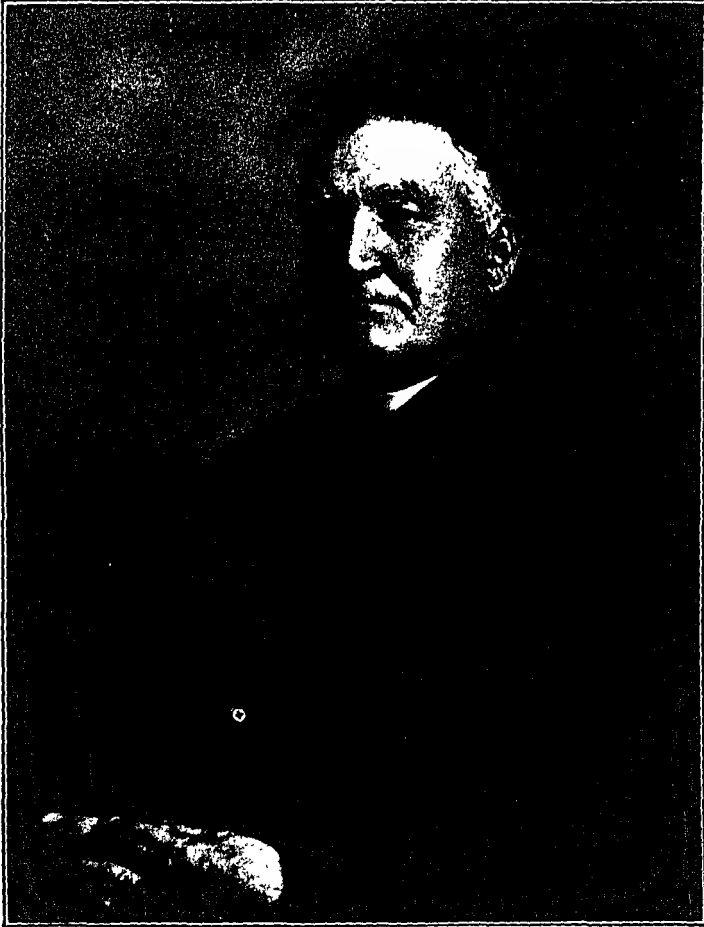
Father Blanchet's ordination scarcely added to the number of the clergy during the first half of 1873; for on January 29th of that year a priest whose name has already appeared in these pages, Rev. Florimond Gendre, had departed this life while stationed at Lake Okanagan.

Meantime Bishop Demers' succession remained an object of dread to every priest in the west and elsewhere.³ After an interim of almost two years, his place was finally taken up by Rev. Charles Joseph Seghers, the able priest whom we have already mentioned more than once. Preconised Bishop of Vancouver Island on March 21, 1873, he was consecrated on the 29th of the following June.

Less than a year had elapsed when the energetic prelate set sail for the west coast of his island diocese, taking with him Rev. A. Brabant. A suitable spot was chosen for a missionary station, which soon became known as Hesquiat. This was an entirely new place, where the young priest was destined to pass no less than thirty-four years of his life, in perfect isolation from the sweets, as well as the turmoils, of civilized life.

With the help of Rev. Mr. Rondeau, he put up mission buildings, wherein the first mass was said on July 5, 1875. After the departure of the older

³It was first offered to the Oblates, and a father of that Congregation was even proposed therefor; but the Superior-General would not entertain the proposition. Then a Rev. Mr. Morrison, of the Province of Quebec, was appointed, and his bulls expedited; but the nominee stoutly declined the honor, and Rome did not insist.



REV. MR. BRABANT

priest, Mr. Brabant was left alone to face the numberless privations and dangers that were to be his among Indians he could not at first understand: dangers from the waves, dangers from epidemics, and even dangers from the malice of man.

He had scarcely had time to make himself at home in his new quarters when smallpox broke out among his people. He then had not only to vaccinate them, but to nurse the sick and bury the dead, as the living so dreaded the disease that they would scarcely help to dig graves.

The chief of the village had been particularly afflicted by the death of near relatives. Brooding over his misfortune, he one day let go the contents of a gun at the devoted priest, inflicting an ugly wound in his hand, after which he deliberately shot him as he was bathing his bleeding hand in a stream, hitting him in the back.

Mr. Brabant was then in a very unenviable plight indeed. His position became even worse when some friendly natives having divested him of his coat and under-clothing, they saw the blood spurting out of a serious wound. They then lost heart one after the other, and walked out of the room to tell their people that the priest was dying. Truth to say, he was himself of the same opinion, and he began to make his preparations to meet the Sovereign Judge. The murderous attack had taken place on October 28, 1875.⁴

⁴The would-be murderer was afterwards found dead in the woods, evidently the victim of suicide.

The poor missionary being away from all white help, suffered terribly of inflammation in both wounds. Then, taken to Victoria for treatment, it was with the greatest difficulty that he saved his hand from the knife of the surgeon, who thought an amputation necessary, which would have perpetually unfitted the priest for the service of the altars. Fortunately for the patient, Bishop Seghers had started that very year St. Joseph's Hospital, which he confided to the Sisters of St. Ann, whose careful management soon ensured for the institution a remarkable degree of prosperity.

A. J. Brabant

REV. MR. BRABANT'S SIGNATURE.

After having been in the doctor's hands for nearly five months, the missionary returned to the scene of his labours and dangers, which he reached on March 23, 1876. In spite of the long apathy of his people, he lived to see the consoling results of his perseverance and pious industry. Many and trying were the years he passed in his surf-beaten post without any apparent cause for self-gratulation, especially as he would not commit the irreparable error of admitting into the Church savages whose hearts were really pagan.

This long period of seemingly useless battling against vice and superstition was so much the more painful as Brabant had commenced his apostolate

by a scene which was as consoling as it is uncommon in the modern annals of the Church. On April 26, 1874, he had regenerated no less than 177 children in one day, or rather at a stretch, a feat which, to our knowledge, was never outdone on the Pacific or elsewhere within our times. Commenced at nine o'clock in the morning, that memorable ceremony lasted till five in the afternoon.

Just one month before, March, 1874, D'Herbomez's missionaries abandoned St. Michael's Mission, a post which from the start had been a source of annoyance and expense without any corresponding results in the religious line.

Less stupendous than the first-fruits of Mr. Brabant's ministry were the results of apostolic zeal in the northern part of the mainland; yet the labourers recently settled there were neither idle nor unsuccessful. Few missionaries have been more painstaking or devoted than the director of the new mission of Our Lady of Good Hope. Even the most casual observer, though of very different religious persuasion, could not help testifying to his great activity and the gratifying outcome of his exertions among the Indians. Witness the following short quotation from the work of a Protestant minister, Rev. Dr. Gordon, who saw him at work:

"On our way we met Père Lejacques, the missionary of this district, whose charge embraces the whole territory between the forks of the Skeena and Fort McLeod, east and west, and between Fort Con-

nolly and Fort St. George,⁶ north and south. After leaving the valley of the Skeena and of the Nasse, all the Christian Indians of the interior throughout this northern district are Roman Catholic. The mission is under the direction of the Oblate Fathers, and the missionaries, if all like the devoted Père Lejacques, are 'in journeyings often and in labours abundant.'"⁷

Concerning the most distant portion of the same priest's flock, Mr. Gordon says that "among our packers was the Achwilgate prince, as we called him. . . . It was gratifying to notice that they had prayers each evening, one of their own number leading their service."⁸

The Sékanais, in his opinion, "appear to be throughout this district quiet, trustworthy and industrious."⁹ As to the mission itself and the adjoining settlement to which it had given rise, he remarks that "about a mile above the fort there is an Indian village possessing a pretty little church, and houses which have an air of neatness and cleanliness not always found among the Indians."¹⁰

⁶Sic for Fort George.

⁷"Mountain and Prairie," p. 123. London, 1880.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 125.

CHAPTER XLI.

BISHOP DUBIEU AND HIS MISSIONARY SYSTEM.

1875-1880.

The good already achieved at Stuart Lake and in the other missions was to be perfected and consolidated with the advent to power of a man who, on the mainland of British Columbia has become typical of the far-seeing and successful missionary. Bishop D'Herbomez, whose state of health had scarcely ever been satisfactory, was no longer equal to the task of visiting the new posts of his immense vicariate-apostolic. He therefore applied for a coadjutor, and Father Durieu was preconised Bishop of Marcopolis in June, 1875, and consecrated at New Westminster on the 24th of the following October. The consecrating prelate, Mgr. D'Herbomez, was assisted by Mgr. Lootens, Vicar-Apostolic of Idaho, and Mgr. Seghers, of Victoria.

Born at St. Pal-de-Mons, diocese of Le Puy, France, on December 4, 1830, Pierre Paul Durieu came to the Pacific December 12, 1859, having been ordained priest March 11, 1854. Endowed with few of those brilliant qualities of the mind which command for their possessor the plaudits of the world, he had from the start the knack of discerning the fact, which so many seem to overlook, that the In-

dian differs from the white infinitely more in his psychic make-up than in his personal appearance.

The Indian missions of the mainland of British Columbia have become almost as famous as the Jesuit reductions of Paraguay. Before we proceed with our narrative, we must be allowed to pay our meed of praise to the memory of him who, after God, was chiefly responsible for their success, and have a few words of explanation concerning his method, or system, as applied to the management of Indians.

The American Indian is a being possessed of aspirations, ways of thinking and standards of judgment which are entirely different from ours. To attempt to win him over to religion, and especially to keep

+ *Paul Durieu, O.M.I.*

BISHOP DURIEU'S SIGNATURE.

him faithful to its moral obligations, by the methods in vogue among ordinary parish priests would be to court defeat and ultimate failure. A degraded creature, who partakes more of the child than of the adult, without being blessed with the innocence of the former or the control over the passions of the latter, the redskin must be treated with the firmness, the prudence and the foresight required by the government of youth, to which must be added not a little perspicacity, so that the wiles of a naturally shrewd, though naive, nature might not lead to false conclusions. Above all, the missionary that would suc-

ceed among the Indians must aim higher to hit lower. Without stretching too much the principles of theology, he should ask for more, because he is sure to get less.

These characteristics, Bishop Durieu had grasped in their entirety, and he made them the basis of his missionary system. Being a grown-up child, the native must be constantly watched, often reproved, and his persevering powers at times tested. Hence the establishment of the watchmen, who are the eyes of the village chief. But a correction cannot be administered without the proper means of enforcing orders: this accounts for the presence among Durieu's neophytes of the so-called "soldiers," or policemen, who are the arms of the chief, whose rôle in the native social economy is that of the head in a well-organized body.

With the spiritual progress of the people still another, and more important, office has come into existence. This is that of the "Eucharist watchman," who to-day renders communicants or the candidates for the first communion the same services as the chiefs did formerly to common people. The duties of these chiefs are now regarded as partaking more of a civil or temporal character. That watchman virtually replaces the priest when he is absent: he comforts the weak and the afflicted, stirs up the lukewarm, and raises up the fallen by kind words and a salutary penance.

This penance may be of a moral or of a corporal

nature, and the love of the same is sedulously inculcated into the faithful. As a consequence, that discipline recalls many points of that in vogue during the first centuries of the Church. Especially during retreats or missions, which are periodically given at relatively short intervals, it is not rare to see Indians, tied up or free, kneeling down or standing up in front of the whole congregation as a means of atoning for public delinquencies.

Such is, in a few words, Bishop Durieu's famous system. It is the key to the wonderful transformation which so many have admired during the lifetime of that greatest of missionaries.

One of the first cares of the new prelate was to visit the different parts of New Caledonia and realize the progress, material and spiritual, accomplished within the new mission of Stuart Lake. From every point of view his journey was successful. This was the summer of 1876. On September 20th of the same year, three Sisters of St. Ann arrived at New Westminster, who were to found an industrial school for the Indian girls of the William's Lake district, while, on Vancouver Island, two young priests, who proved to be a valuable acquisition for the missions of the island diocese, offered their services to Bishop Seghers. These were the Revs. J. N. Lemmens and Joseph Nicolaye, natives of Holland, the first of whom we shall have again to mention in connection with a high station, while of the latter we may say that for fifteen years he devoted himself to



RT. REV. P. P. DURIEU, O.M.I.
First Bishop of New Westminster



the welfare of the west coast Indians prior to ministering to the whites.

On the lower Fraser, some distance from Yale, the Church suffered about this time her first and only serious check in the history of the Pacific coast missions, apart from the aborigines of the north (on the island and corresponding mainland coast), who never took kindly to her moral code and religious ordinances. The Thompson Indians had shown themselves exceptionally slow in accepting the yoke of Christ in exchange for their heathenish rites. On the other hand, an Anglican minister had made their country his special field of labour, who did not scruple to represent the religion of the priest as unnecessarily hard and severe. He particularly took exception to the strictness with which that priest enforced monogamy. "David and Solomon had each hundreds of wives," he would say; "why ask so much of poor Indians?" So it came to pass that this catering to the passions, joined to the usual liberalities, finally had the desired results, and a majority of the Thompson tribe embraced the schism of Henry VIII., though even there God has his elect in the persons of a fervent flock whose members recognize the true Pastor.

We have left Mr. Brabant the victim of a dastardly murderous assault, struggling along against the indifference and superstitious tendencies of the Hesquiat Indians, among whom he counted as yet but one Christian family, though the others did not

refuse, as a rule, to assist at mass on Sundays. They also followed as much as they thought fit of his directions when it was a question of their material welfare. Bishop Seghers gave him, September 29, 1876, an agreeable surprise by calling on him with Mr. Nicolaye. Two days later (October 1st) the prelate blessed the local church, which he put under the patronage of St. Anthonine, in presence of the representatives of five tribes. Then Mr. Nicolaye was left with Mr. Brabant to be initiated into the difficulties of Indian work. On the following 5th of December, the latter made for Barclay Sound, on the same western coast, to arrange for the establishment of a mission in that locality.

On his arrival there, Brabant noticed quite a number of people sitting in front of their houses, as is the wont of the Indians when engaged in no particular work. One of them got up before the newcomers could land and, in an elaborate speech, began to abuse the missionary who, he declared, was not wanted and must not dare come ashore.

But the priest was equal to the occasion. Knowing that the aborigines have a superstitious dread lest their words be couched on paper, he quietly took up his pocket-book, and pretended to write down the gist of the man's argument. Which seeing, the latter immediately stopped and disappeared behind one of the houses. Then the chief of the village welcomed the priest's party.

Apparently disgusted at the little headway the

Hesquiat mission was making, Rev. Mr. Nicolaye profited by the passage (March 25, 1877), of a schooner to leave for Barclay Sound and Victoria. On the following 26th of April he returned to Mr. Brabant with orders from his bishop that the latter should at once repair to headquarters, to attend a synod at which all the other priests of the diocese were to be present.

On his way to the Yukon, where he intended to establish missionary stations, Bishop Seghers commissioned Mr. Brabant to go and superintend the erection of mission buildings at Namukamus, Barclay Sound. Pursuant to these orders, that gentleman left, April 24, 1877, and, with the aid of a French Canadian named Morin, he put up first a cabin twelve feet square, and then a church 64 by 26, wherein he said mass for the first time on the following Christmas. Mr. Nicolaye was appointed the first resident pastor of the new mission, which was dedicated to St. Leo the Great.

Shortly thereafter, the interests of education were promoted by the establishment, May 15, 1877, of a day school at Nanaimo. The Sisters of St. Ann, to the number of three, were the teachers.

Returning to the mainland, we perceive in the north still fresh traces of the enthusiasm with which the Carriers of Stuart Lake and other points received Bishop Durieu in the course of his 1876 visitation. In the fall of the following year, those Indians saw a prelate of a different kind arrive from

the east. This was none other than the Anglican Bishop Bompas, the quondam adversary of the Catholic missionaries along the Mackenzie. That gentleman was repairing to the Pacific coast, with a view to reconciling with the authorities of his denomination an able man and most successful Indian organizer, Mr. William Duncan, of Metlakahtla. Although his work had so far been done under the auspices and with the material assistance of an Anglican society, Duncan was too good a Protestant not to claim the privilege of doing as he pleased and of "protesting" against episcopal interference, even in matters which are generally regarded as essential.

Bompas arrived at Fort St. James in the very first days of November, 1877, and, in spite of the late season and the reluctance of the Indians to accompany him (as they foresaw they would have no means of returning), he left on the 7th for Babine and the Skeena.

The Anglican dignitary was now treading purely Catholic ground, and could do but little in the way of proselytizing. Yet he found means of deriding in presence of the Indians those practices which are distinctly Catholic, declaring in words which the Carriers still repeat in the peculiar dialect and with the droning intonation proper to the eastern Dénés: "God is a spirit and not brass," as if the good man had been under the impression that his hearers believed the contrary because they wore brass crosses. However, thanks to the express directions of

Father Le Jacq, the Indians were kind to the wayfarer, while they openly pitied him for what they considered his ignorance concerning their real faith and the reason of their practices. Bishop Bompas himself admitted it afterwards, and his biographer says in this connection: "The Babine Indians in this region, being all Roman Catholics, were naturally suspicious of a Church of England missionary. 'However,' said the bishop, 'they treated us well.'"

For 1878 we have to chronicle the foundation of a mission at Kamloops, on the mainland, which was made possible by the recall of Father Chirouse from the Indian school of Tulalip, Wash. He was the last of the Oregon Oblates to work on American soil, as he had been one of the four priests of that Order who first came to consecrate their energies to mission work there.

In the course of the same year, the Bishop of Vancouver Island opened churches at Comox and Nanaimo. One had first been erected at the latter place in the course of 1864, which was put under the patronage of St. Peter. The original church put up by the Oblates at Esquimalt having been replaced by a better building, this was blessed in 1879 with St. Joseph as patron.

"*An Apostle of the North*," by Rev. H. A. Cody, p. 194. New York, 1908. It may be worth remarking that Bompas was then absolutely in the hands of the hated "Romish" priest. Had Father Le Jacq chosen to act towards him then as Bompas had done towards the Catholic missionaries of the Yukon, his position would not have been an enviable one, considering that the influence of the priest throughout the Stuart Lake district was incomparably superior to that ever possessed by any Protestant missionary over his people.

Furthermore, the ranks of the British Columbia clergy were enlarged in 1879 by the coming to the mainland of Fathers Jean-Marie Le Jeune and Eugène C. Chirouse, the latter a near relative of the worthy missionary we have just mentioned, and, on Vancouver Island, of Rev. J. A. Van Nevel, who reached Victoria on December 12th. All of these have shown themselves true apostolic men, and are still actively engaged in the field of the Pacific missions.

By January 26th of that year, Bishop Seghers had surprised his friend of Hesquiat with the news that he was going to Oregon City, as coadjutor to

Eminentiss. Tua

humilis in Christo Servus

Car. J. Seghers

Arch. Oregon.

ARCHBISHOP SEGHERS' SIGNATURE.

Archbishop Blanchet. As a matter of fact, the transfer had already been effected on December 10th of the preceding year. On December 20, 1880, Seghers succeeded the venerable Blanchet on the archiepiscopal See of Oregon. As a consequence, Rev. Jean-Baptiste Brondel, a priest who had lately been in charge of Steilacoom, Washington Territory, was consecrated for the bishopric of Vancouver

Island by the retiring prelate, now Archbishop Seghers. The ceremony took place at Victoria, on December 14, 1879.²

About this time a valuable recruit took his place in the ranks of the island clergy. This was Rev. Gustavus Donckel, who was soon after stationed among the Cowichan Indians, whose pastor he was for about ten years.

Seven months after Brondel's consecration, on July 26, 1880, Fathers Coccola, Chiappini and Morice, of the Oblate Order, reached his episcopal city on their way to New Westminster. They were as yet but scholastic brothers, and might be considered as part of the wreckage scattered to all the points of the compass by the anti-Christian storm that was commencing to agitate France, the former mother and protectress of foreign missions.

²Mgr. Brondel was a native of Maines, Belgium, where he was born in 1849.

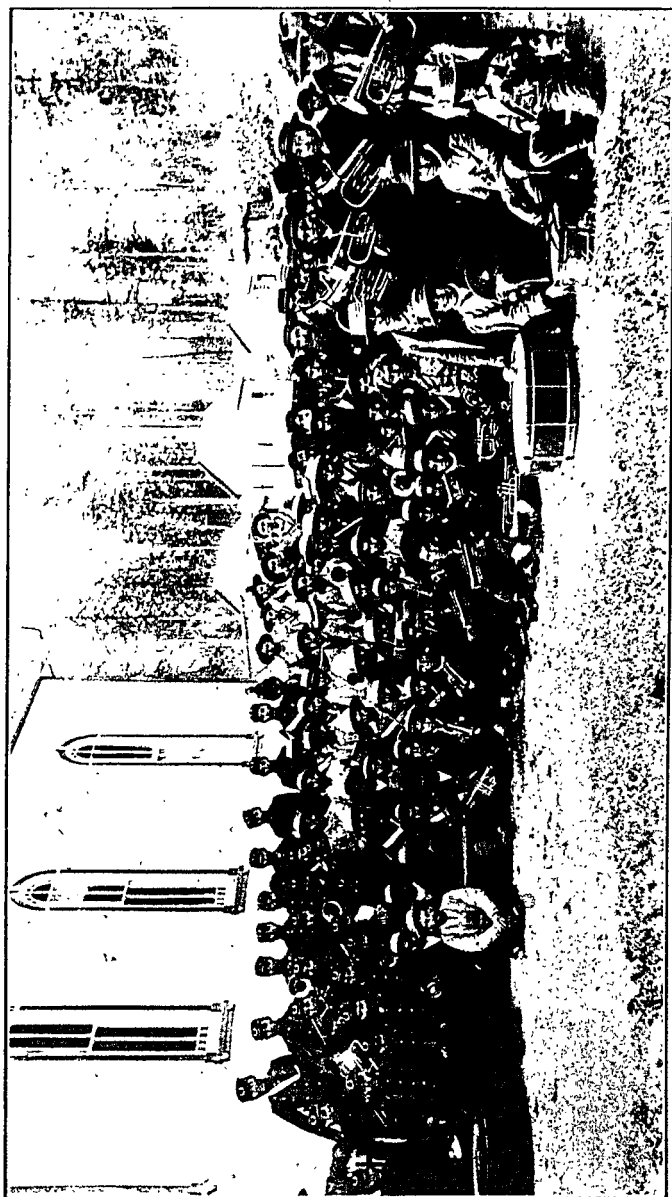
CHAPTER XLII.

SOARING STILL HIGHER.

1880-1886.

The same year, 1880, was practically the dawn of a new era for the Church in British Columbia. The Canadian Pacific Railway, which was to make a nation of provinces hitherto connected only by the political tie, was already in sight. The workmen engaged in its construction, no less than the immigrants whom it was to bring to the Pacific, combined to draw the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities to the fact that the time was passing away when the Indian missions were the exclusive field in which the apostolic labourers of the mainland were to display their zeal. True, many posts were still, and remained long, chiefly, if not entirely, concerned with the natives; but Victoria, Esquimalt and Nanaimo, on the island; with New Westminster, Yale and Kamloops, on the mainland, were already posing as towns, if not cities, the spiritual interests of which must be looked after.

Even the Indian missions were on the eve of a gradual transformation, at least on the coast, where Bishop Durieu held sway with the younger Father Chirouse as a zealous auxiliary. The first years of probation had passed, and the missionary prelate



INDIAN BRASS BANDS

who, with his system of overseers and public penances, had reproduced on the Pacific the Church of the first centuries, was soon to make his beloved missions advance to the more elaborate stage of the medieval Church, with her beautiful ceremonies and her religious plays or "mysteries."

Before we introduce the reader to this new phase in the missions of the Pacific, we may glance at the general and particular state of the two ecclesiastical divisions to the west of the Rocky Mountains. The vicariate-apostolic then (1880) counted seventeen priests, all Oblates, with sixteen brothers of the same Order in seven missions, which had a large number of outposts. These were presided over by two bishops, one of whom, the coadjutor, practically passed his whole life among the Indians. At New Westminster there was a regular parish for the whites, and a church that was the religious rendezvous of numerous Indians from all quarters. Three priests and four brothers were attached to that post. The Sisters of St. Ann directed an academy, and Oblate brothers taught in a college presided over by a priest of their Congregation.

St. Mary's Mission was exclusively for the natives of the Lower Fraser valley, though its church, which was the largest in the whole vicariate, at times admitted within its walls large numbers from other tribes, gathered there for special courses of instructions and religious exercises. That station had then for personnel two priests, three scholastic, and as

many lay, brothers. Under the wise supervision of Father Carion, who had come to the Pacific immediately after the Franco-German war, were two industrial schools, one for the Indian boys, in the immediate care of Brother Henry (formerly a steamer captain), and another for the girls of the same tribes, presided over by Sister Luména.

At the junction of the North with the South Thompson was the village of Kamloops. Slightly below stood St. Louis Mission, where two fathers, aided for the temporal concerns by a lay brother, attended to the spiritual needs of the local and neighbouring whites, but especially to those of the still numerous Indians within its territory. Three Sisters of St. Ann had just opened (March, 1880), a convent school for the convenience of the white children of Kamloops and vicinity.

Further east was the Okanagan mission, which occupied two priests and as many brothers. Then, in the southeastern corner of British Columbia, not far from the Rocky Mountains, the Oblates had some years before (1874) added to the field they already cultivated in the Pacific province the mission of the Kootenays vacated by the Jesuit fathers to whom its foundation was due. Under the patronage of St. Eugene, it had become the headquarters of Father Fouquet who, with a clerical socius and a lay brother, was enjoying the sweets of a perfect seclusion from the rest of the world.

St. Joseph was the patron of William's Lake mis-

sion. Thence the missionaries periodically visited the Shushwaps, the Chilcotins and some of the southern Carriers. Thence also the Caribou miners were ministered to by Father McGuckin or one of the three priests under him. A school for girls, established near the local church, was conducted by four Sisters of St. Ann, while a similar institution for boys had also been started there on December 9, 1873, which was still fairly flourishing, though it had seen better days. The mission fathers were aided by two lay brothers.

Finally, the distant Church of Stuart Lake was in a fair way towards prosperity. Yet, by the end of the summer, 1880, it was, as it were, under a cloud owing to the departure of Father Le Jacq, whose services were needed at Kamloops. The Dénés of the north appreciated his devotion to their interests, and for some time resented his removal from among them. He was succeeded by Father Marchal.

On Vancouver Island, the number of the clergy was so limited that few posts, or even outposts, could be founded. Bishop Brondel, aided by one or two priests, attended to the Catholics of the provincial capital. At Barclay Sound, Mr. Nicolayé was making fair headway with his Indians, while nearer Victoria Mr. Lemmens was ruining his health in his efforts to make decent Christians out of natives who were so much the farther from the kingdom of God as they were nearer our much boasted civilization, and the veteran Mr. Mandart was doing all he could

to save the Sanich, after he had filled the post of director of St. Louis College, at the capital.

Belonging to the same diocese was another priest it remains for us to mention, though just then he happened to be stationed outside of Canada. This was the Rev. J. Althoff, a native of Holland, who had made his theological studies at the American College of Louvain, and had reached Victoria in the fall of 1878. He was then (1880) at Wrangell, Alaska, but was soon to be appointed to the Nanaimo mission, on the island, whence, however, in the course of a year or two, he was to return north, making this time his headquarters at Juneau.

Lastly, we find at the same period the persevering missionary of Hesquiat still waiting for the days of grace among his people. In the following year, June, 1881, he was building for the Indians of Ahousat, eighteen miles from Hesquiat, a modest church, to which were annexed two rooms to be used as a house and a sacristy.

Meantime, the question of education had been attracting some attention on the mainland. Bishop D'Herbomez then sustained a controversy on this subject of paramount importance. He exposed in a New Westminster paper the doctrines and policy of the Church on the question, in a series of letters which were reprinted in pamphlet form on a hand press, at St. Mary's, and distributed to all the members of the British Columbia Legislature.

The prelate was scarcely through with this little

work when, in the spring of 1882, his vicariate received a representative of the Oblate General in the person of Father Martinet, whom, in spite of his age and infirmities, he accompanied to most of the missionary stations under him. Father Martinet's visit was productive of lasting good. Bishop and visitor then came to an agreement as to an equitable division between the diocese and the Oblate Order of the properties which had so far been managed exclusively by the Oblates, thus leaving a door open for the secular priests to come and profit by the labours of the pioneers.

Revs. Coccola and Chiappini had been ordained at St. Mary's Mission during Lent, 1881; Brother Morice was likewise raised to the priesthood, at the same place and by the same prelate, Mgr. D'Herbomez, on July 2, 1882.

The vales and mountain sides of British Columbia were then echoing the sound of numberless axes and picks, which were cutting a way for the Canadian Pacific Railway throughout the Pacific province. This meant hundreds, nay thousands, of workingmen, many of whom were Catholics. Father Le Jeune and, later on, Father Coccola attended to the needs of their souls from St. Mary's and Kamloops respectively, while Father Morice was being sent, July, 1882, to William's Lake mission. On his way north that young priest travelled in the company of the veteran Father Pandosy, who was to assume a month later the direction of Stuart Lake mission.

Early in the fall of the same year, Father McGuckin bade farewell to William's Lake, where he had rendered yeoman service to the whites scattered over the northern valleys. His destination was New Westminster. There he was to fill the double post of parish priest and procurator of the vicariate-apostolic. Both offices had so far been held by Father Horris, now almost completely exhausted by overwork. One of Father McGuckin's conquests was the Hon. J. F. McCreight, a Supreme Court judge who left a Protestant sect for the true Church, of which he remained to his death a staunch and pious adherent.

In the course of 1883 the promising mission of Stuart Lake greeted again Bishop Durieu, on a tour of episcopal inspection. The Carriers, Babines and Sékanais within its boundaries were still smarting under the pain caused by the removal of their beloved Father Le Jacq, now superior at Kamloops. The visiting prelate consoled them, and strengthened their faith by the introduction of ceremonies and Eucharistic devotions for which they had not so far been judged to be ripe.

On Vancouver Island, Bishop Brondel was not long spared to the Church of Victoria. In 1884 he was transferred to the new diocese of Helena, Montana. In prevision of this change Rev. Mr. Jonckau was named in 1883 to succeed him as Bishop of Vancouver Island; but he pleaded ill-health and, armed with a doctor's certificate, he evaded the burden

which he deemed beyond his strength. Mgr. Seghers was then at Rome. As Propaganda was exercised over the question of finding a successor to Bishop Brondel, the archbishop, in his zeal for the poor missions of Alaska, which then belonged to the diocese of Vancouver Island, generously volunteered to return to his old field of action, where he was welcomed back in the course of 1885.

On the mainland God was sparing the lives of Mgr. D'Herbomez and his devoted coadjutor. With a greater continuity at the helm, real progress was more easy. The northern Indians were gradually becoming reconciled to the loss of their first pastor; from William's Lake Father Morice was regularly sallying out to evangelize the Chilcotin Indians, a rather wild Déné tribe whose language he was acquiring; Father Le Jeune was doing the same for the benefit of the Thompson, and afterwards the Shushwaps; Father Chirouse, junior, utilized the resources of his zeal on behalf of the aborigines of the sea coast, Lillooet and Douglas, as well as of the Lower Fraser; Father Le Jacq was governing the post of Kamloops and occasionally attending to the needs of the Shushwaps, while Father Fouquet was crowning a life of usefulness by continuing the good commenced by the Jesuits among the Kootenay Indians.

From 1884 dates a notable change of heart in the hitherto obdurate Hesquiats of Mr. Brabant, and the Cloyoquot Indians were now favoured with the min-

istrations of Mr. Van Nevel, who was to remain five years their pastor.

Another sign of progress was the arrival, in the course of 1886, of representatives of a new Institute of women specially destined for the care of the sick. These were Sisters of Providence, who then reached New Westminster, where they soon after erected a fine hospital.

Unfortunately all these advantages were soon to be counterbalanced by a catastrophe so sudden and so unusual that it took the world by surprise. Led by his zeal for the salvation of souls in distant Alaska, Bishop Seghers had set out on an expedition along the Yukon, in the company of a few natives as guides and an American, named Francis Fuller, who was to act as a body servant. Such a journey entailed untold hardships, and either because these affected the mind of the latter, or because his courage was not up to the task of enduring them with equanimity, it gradually became evident that he was seriously discontented.

We regret to say that a white man, who had ever proved an unscrupulous enemy of the Catholic missions in Alaska, stooped low enough to take advantage of that unsatisfactory mental condition of the poor man to still embitter him against his Bishop by trumped up charges which were as puerile as, under the circumstances, they were fraught with momentous possibilities.

Early in the morning of November 28, 1886, Mgr.

Seghers was peacefully resting after a hard day's travelling, when he was suddenly aroused from his dreams by a gruff voice at the door of the semi-subterranean hut in which he had spent the night.

"Get up, Bishop," he heard his man cry out in an excited tone.

This was not the friendly morning call to which he had a right. Yet Seghers partially rose and sat on his bedding preparatory to lifting his heart to God. But he scarcely had time to collect his thoughts, for presently the barrel of a gun appeared threateningly in front of him. Realizing his situation, the prelate bowed his head down and crossed his hands over his breast. Then almost immediately a flash and a loud report told of an awful deed: the Bishop of Vancouver Island had been shot by his servant!¹

Great was the shock caused to the civilized world by this horrible murder. The already sorely tried missions of Vancouver Island especially felt the blow: after so many changes in their direction, they were again without a head, and the scattered flock without a chief pastor!

Another calamity which marked the same year, 1886, affected the mainland of the province. We mean the complete destruction by fire of the nascent

¹According to Warburton Pike, a noted traveller and hunter, who was on the spot shortly after the horrible deed, "a mild rebuke had been administered by the archbishop overnight for negligence in some small matter, and that, according to the Indian who was travelling with them at the time, was the only reason to account for the murder" ("Through the Subarctic Forest," p. 241. London, 1896).

town of Vancouver, at the entrance of Burrard Inlet. The preceding year the C. P. R. had pushed its operations as far as that magnificent harbour, giving rise to a settlement which already boasted some 3,000 inhabitants, when, on the 13th of June, 1886, a fierce wind carried to its very heart a bush fire which had been for some time raging in the vicinity of the new town. Practically everything disappeared and fifty lives were lost in the conflagration which ensued. A secular priest, Rev. Mr. Fay, the first of his class stationed on the mainland, had commenced parish work among the few hundreds of Catholics in the place: he lost everything except the set of vestments he used in the celebration of mass.

But, Phoenix-like, a new and better constructed town soon grew up on the ashes of the old, and with it a Catholic church building of modest dimensions, which was opened to public worship in the course of October, 1886. To that date may, therefore, be ascribed the foundation of the now flourishing parish of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary.

Almost two years elapsed before the Church of Vancouver Island (or Victoria) was relieved of her widowhood. Then the Rev. Mr. Lemmens consented to assume the mantle stained with the blood of Bishop Seghers. Rev. John Nicholas Lemmens was born June 3, 1850, at Schimmert, Holland. He had received the order of priesthood on March 25, 1875, and since his arrival at Victoria he had been a zealous worker in the Lord's vineyard. In 1885 he had



RT. REV. J. N. LEMMENS
Bishop of Vancouver Island



founded a mission at Cloyoquot, on the west coast of the island, whose pastor he remained until his appointment to the vacant bishopric. On June 25th, Mr. Brabant happening to pass by, found him "in his shirt sleeves, with an axe in his hand, splitting firewood,"² a rather unusual preparation to such an exalted office as that of bishop. His consecration took place on August 5, 1888.

In the autumn of the preceding year, the Archbishops of Montreal and St. Boniface, accompanied by the veteran missionary of the western plains, Father Lacombe, came to admire the fruits of Durieu's long-sightedness in his dealings with the aborigines. They were welcomed by the Skwamish Indians, whose neat village lay opposite the young town of Vancouver. Father Lacombe could not restrain the tears. He wept for joy and out of sadness; for joy at seeing Indians so well formed, so fully instructed and such thorough Christians, and out of sadness as he compared them with the natives of the Northwest Territories, for whom he was sacrificing himself.³

After this welcome at the terminus of the trans-continental railway line, the coast Indians repaired to St. Mary's Mission, on the Fraser, where they were joined by the tribes whose habitat is within the same valley, as well as by representatives of those of the Kamloops and William's Lake districts. Alto-

²"Vancouver Island and its Missions," p. 79.

³Letter from Father Le Jacq, 6th November, 1887.

gether, apart from the whites present at the ceremonies, there were at least three thousand natives assembled. Procèsions of the Blessed Sacrament with ceremonial as gorgeous as possible under the circumstances, general communions of men and of women bearing the badge of the Guard of Honour, public consecrations of the faithful to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, representations of the principal stations of the cross by Indians forming living tableaux and crowned by a final group illustrating the Crucifixion, night celebrations to the accompaniment of fireworks, Chinese lanterns and coloured fires, such were the attractions which, on that and many other occasions, Bishop Durieu offered to his people as incentives to devotion and means of honest recreation.⁴

Almost every year had, in one place or another, some such celebration which, as time went on, became more and more elaborate. These not only touched the hearts of the natives, but made on the whites an impression of which the press and even books soon became the echoes. We choose the appreciation of one of the newspapers which described those events, because that publication, besides being non-Catholic, was one of the first to notice them.

Sixty-six canoes had brought to the Skwamish village crowds of Fraser River Indians for a retreat preached early in June, 1888. Under date June 22nd of the same year, the *Vancouver News-Advertiser*

⁴It goes without saying that all the expenses entailed by those festivities were defrayed by the Indians themselves.

thus described the last ceremonies of the closing day of that retreat:

“For weeks past the little Indian village nestling under the hills at the other side of the Inlet has been the scene of busy preparations and unwonted activity. The every-day calm of the life of those primitive people has been broken by the sound of the hammer and the saw; the bright little houses have become resplendent in all the glory of fresh paint; the canoes have been overhauled and touched up with vermilion; mysterious looking packages have been constantly arriving from as far east as Montreal, and everything betokened the approach of some great event. It has ever been the policy of the Roman Catholic Church in dealing with the Indians to skillfully make use of their love of display, and, by indulging them in this particular, to draw them closer to its fold. The success that has attended the Church’s missionary efforts is evident to all who have had any dealings with the Indians, and the progress that has been made by that people under the guidance of their spiritual fathers is most remarkable.

“Last night witnessed the result of these weeks of preparation—a sight that was both novel and attractive to all who witnessed it, and which must have been most gratifying to the good fathers themselves and their native charges. The celebration was in honour of *Corpus Christi*,^a a feast that has been held

^aAt least so thought the newspaper man, deceived as he was by the nature of the ceremonies.

in high repute in the Church for ages. Extensive preparations had been made in the village for the event. The main street was hung with festoons of evergreens mingled with coloured lanterns. A shrine was erected on the beach and decorated with the bright colours so pleasing to the native eye. Two altars under elaborate canopies were erected at either end of the village a short distance from the water's edge on rising ground. A large canvas tent or tabernacle was erected just back of the church, and a temporary altar raised which, when its many candles were lighted, presented a really beautiful appearance. The open space to the west of the village was covered with canvas tents, and every house was crowded with visitors.

"The celebration commenced with a solemn service and benediction by His Lordship Bishop Durieu, which was held in the large tabernacle. A more striking scene has seldom been witnessed. The dark rows of kneeling worshippers, the bright altar showing up beautifully in the deepening twilight, the rich vestments of the bishop and attendants all combined to make a picture worthy the brush of a Rembrandt or a Murillo. The effect of the singing was also very striking, the shrill yet musical treble of the women and children being answered antiphonally by the deep bass of the men.

"After the service was over the Indians proceeded to their canoes, which had been decorated with coloured paper lanterns, and the procession was

formed. Instead of paddling as in the old days, the steamer *Etta White* towed them along in pairs. There were 154 canoes in the procession, and the effect of the many-coloured lights reflected on the glass-like surface of the water was really fairy-like. Two Indian bands, one from Fort Douglas and the other belonging to the mission, were amongst the procession and played several of the sweet old tunes of the Catholic Church. In the intervals of playing the Indians chanted hymns, the effect over the water being beautiful. The night was all that could be desired: a nearly full moon hung in the cloudless sky, with hardly the shadow of a breeze to ruffle the calm surface of the inlet. After making a circuit of about a couple of miles, the procession returned to the village, being greeted both on its departure and return with the firing of cannon.

"A large number of people went over from Vancouver to witness the celebration. The steamer *Muriel* had a large scow lashed alongside which was crowded with people, while everything in the shape of a rowboat or canoe was pressed into service and the whole surface of the inlet was dotted with craft."

The entire ceremony was crowned by the solemn consecration of the people to the Sacred Heart, by Bishop Durieu facing an illuminated statue of Our Lord and surrounded by the natives in their canoes ranged in the form of a half-moon.

**The News-Advertiser*, June 22nd, 1883.

CHAPTER XLIII.

FOR MIND AND SOUL.

1887-1895.

We might have chronicled for 1887 the arrival at Victoria of Rev. Joseph Leterme, a worthy priest whose clerical life was spent mostly at, or near, Victoria, and the nomination of Father Coccola to the post of Kootenay, which he was to hold for a period of twelve years, endearing himself to native and white alike. Father Le Jeune had by this time been transferred to Kamloops, and in the north Father Morice was continuing the work so zealously commenced by Father Le Jacq at Stuart Lake, whither he had been sent in August, 1885, and where he was to pass the best nineteen years of his life.

In this connection some reference may be made to the efforts of two British Columbia missionaries to facilitate instruction among the aborigines. Memorizing the long formulas of the catechism, hymns and prayers had so far proved a most tedious and time-absorbing process. To the east of the Rocky Mountains, the missionaries had adopted, generally with some slight changes, the ingenious characters invented by the Rev. James Evans, a Protestant clergyman. But these signs which, from the start, had been intended for the Cree language, were

absolutely unequal to the task of rendering the exceedingly numerous and delicate sounds of the Déné languages.

The very first year of his stay at Stuart Lake, Father Morice devised for the benefit of his charge a system of writing which, syllabic like that of Evans, differed entirely by the nature and arrangement of its component parts. While expressing faithfully the sounds of their very complex language, it was simplicity itself by the way its elements flowed, as it were, from one another, the rational method with which they were grouped, and the ease with which each of them was identified.

This system soon spread among the natives of the north, who learned how to read and write by themselves after a few lessons had been given the children of the principal villages. Some individuals acquired the new science in the space of two or three evenings. Type was then cast and books were printed, which consisted mostly of primers, or readers, and prayer-books containing the full text of the various prayers in use, the catechism, numerous hymns, etc. Nay more, a monthly periodical was printed with the new characters, which brought within the reach of the natives such sacred and profane information as was thought best calculated to benefit them.

In the south, Father Le Jeune had the same end in view when, somewhat later on, he adapted the stenography of the Duployé brothers to the trans-

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scription of Chinook. The acquiring of that shorthand was rendered all the more easy as the verbal poverty of that jargon made the repetition of its words more frequent. He, too, besides valuable little books, published a periodical which, for a number of years, did a vast amount of good among the Salish Indians.

Simply for the sake of completing our sketch of missionary life among the natives of British Columbia, and to show that even there trials were not wanting, we may be permitted to present the reader with a twofold instance of the difficulties which that life involved in the northern part of the province. On a cold February evening, the director of Stuart Lake mission was returning from Fort Babine, 160 miles distant from his headquarters, after having preached a retreat to the natives who frequented that post, when he reached with his dog train a long inlet in the lake on which lay his residence. He had repeatedly warned his guides that he must be home by Saturday night, so that he might not miss the Sunday mass, for which some of the requisites were now wanting in his travelling outfit. To accomplish this it was absolutely necessary that a village on the lake, called Yœkooche, should be made by Friday. That date had now been reached, and the party was still far from that place.

The priest's companions, four burly Babine Indians, had passed the five preceding days of the week in a sort of journeying for the slowness of which

they blamed the weather, and had landed at dusk as one of them had his feet frozen. They now intended to camp instead of trying to get to Yoekoche, pretexting also the ever-increasing thickness of the snow on the ice and unmistakable evidences of an approaching storm. Therefore, though not as yet inured to snowshoeing without a beaten track, the missionary left them, in spite of their protests that he was sure to get frozen, and made for the place whence he knew that he should depart early next morning if he was to get home for the following Sunday.

It may have been 5 P.M. Darkness had now spread over lake and forest, and, after a few miles of painful walking through a deep snow, the weather, which had so far been exceptionally severe, developed into a regular blizzard. Under the sting of the frost, the rocks and trees on the shore were at short intervals sending forth detonations as of cannon; the wind whined plaintively through the spruces, then burst into deafening squalls, which swept the fresh snow from the ice and raised it in immense clouds, lashing the face of the wayfarer as one would with a whip.

The missionary was painfully musing on the appositeness of the Indians' warning when lo! two of them overtook him, laden with his blankets. By walking in their footsteps, he was momentarily endowed with a new lease of vigour. But it was bitterly cold: the two packers must proceed at a good

speed if they are to keep themselves from freezing. On the other hand, already tired out and exhausted, the priest could not keep up with them, and very soon the Indians were out of sight. Now fully alive to the danger of being left alone in that terrible storm, especially at a time when the unspeakable *mal de raquettes*¹ had him in its grip, the priest shouted to them requests for assistance. But no answer was vouchsafed other than the derisive howling of the hurricane.

What was to be done? To walk even at a slow pace had become impossible; resting on the ice without any shelter seemed to be courting death, and then should the traveller survive a halt in the midst of the storm, he felt that, under the circumstances, he would not be able to put on again his awkward foot-gear, which meant that further progress could not then be thought of. But human endurance has limits: whether he was to die or not, the missionary must lay down. Commending himself to God, he took off his snowshoes and stretched himself on the ice, awaiting death or the beneficent effects of rest.

How long he remained on his frigid couch is more than he could say. It seems that it was scarcely half an hour, and, with God's special protection, he lived to go on with his perilous trip. Nay, by sounding the ice in every direction, he had the good fortune of finding under the fresh snow a well-beaten

¹A peculiar and most painful spraining of the muscles of the legs and feet.

trail, which allowed him to dispense with his snow-shoes. This he carefully followed, stepping as low as possible lest he should lose it. When he reached Yœkooche, the people of the place were reciting their morning prayers. The missionary had been out, supperless, the whole night. Many a long day was he afterwards laid up as a consequence of his awful experience in the midst of the blizzard; but his end had been accomplished: he had not missed mass on a Sunday.

At times danger was due more to human passions than to the inclemency of the elements. Because, after many trials, the Babines would not do away with those heathenish practices which Father Nobili had prematurely flattered himself with having extirpated from among them, the same Babine Indians had, on the advice of Bishop D'Herbomez, been left to themselves for a number of years. As a consequence, all sorts of disorders had crept back into the tribe. Having had to revisit them in order to reconcile to God one of their chiefs in danger of death, Father Morice succeeded, with the help of the better disposed among them, in making all but one of the divorced persons return to their lawful spouses. Even the subject of this exception finally yielded to his entreaties and promised to break off the unholy union he had contracted with an unbaptized woman, though he well knew that said woman was averse to leaving him.

The missionary had just commenced to enjoy a

well-merited rest in his cabin, an unfinished building some little distance from the village, when, about midnight, he was startled out of his sleep by the voice of a woman, evidently in a great passion, who tried to break open his door.

"Patrick, Patrick," she called out, "come out quickly! They are coming to kill the priest: they may kill you with him!"

It was the mother of Father Morice's companion, who wanted her son away from danger. At the same time, by the shore of the lake an indescribable tumult was keeping everyone awake. Noise as of contending factions, yells and frightful shouting were heard which, on enquiry, proved to proceed from the numerous and ill-famed relatives of the discarded woman just mentioned. It appears that, in her rage at seeing herself abandoned by her paramour, she had picked up a rope and gone to hang herself. The priest being the cause of her death, he had, according to the native code, to pay with his head for her rash action.

Fortunately quite a number of Babines had now come back to their God, and were striving to prevent the foul deed. Hence the tumult.

The missionary made the sacrifice of his life, in case God had ordained that he should fall a martyr to the cause of the indissolubility of the marriage tie, and then composed himself to sleep again as much as this was possible under the circumstances. To make a long story short, the would-be murderers

were at length overpowered, and, in the morning, the cause of the whole trouble was found crouching in the corner of a secluded lodge. She had only feigned to take her own life in order to have her revenge on the priest!

To return to the succession of events, British Columbia Catholics were then (1888) proud of seeing one of their number, a convert from Protestantism, at the head of public affairs in their province, in the person of the Hon. Alexander E. B. Davie. Appointed attorney-general on January 29, 1883, he had, on April 1, 1887, become premier while still holding his previous portfolio. He remained at the helm to the day of his death, which occurred August 1, 1889. A thoroughly upright man, he was "deeply regretted" according to Alex. Begg.²

Two days later, his own brother, Theodore, an able lawyer, took his place as attorney-general in the government of the Hon. John Robson, who then succeeded Alexander Davie as premier. On July 2, 1892, Theodore Davie assumed the premiership, while retaining his post of attorney-general, and the general elections held in 1894 sustained him in power. Theodore Davie had likewise renounced Protestantism for the true faith. He died Chief Justice of British Columbia.

But we must not anticipate. We now see at New Westminster Mgr. D'Herbomez suffering to such an extent that he is no more able to fulfil the

²"History of British Columbia," p. 548.

duties of his double charge of vicar-apostolic (or superior of priests and people) and of vicar of missions for the Oblates under him. This unsatisfactory state of health had been more pronounced since the voyage he made to Europe to assist at the General Chapter of 1887. Hence, at his request, he was relieved of his functions of vicar of missions, and, by letters dated August 12, 1888, his coadjutor, Bishop Durien, was invested with the same.

On the following day, an event quietly took place at the new seaport of Vancouver, which was indicative of the faith that was placed in the future of the town. We have already noted the inauguration of a parish there. As no church is complete without a school, especially in countries such as British Columbia where public education is godless, or by euphemism secular, Rev. Mr. Fay, the organizer of the new Catholic centre, took steps towards obtaining nuns for the youth of the same. As in the Pacific province all the teaching nuns were then Sisters of St. Ann, he applied to the provincial house at Victoria, with the result that, on August 13, 1888, three religious of that Institute were landing at Vancouver, who immediately set upon creating a home for themselves and their future pupils. By means of a loan, three lots were secured near the church at a cost of \$1,100, and, on August 23, the foundations of St. Ann's Academy were commenced. For several years it was for the sisters a hard struggle with poverty; but the roll of attendance gradu-

ally grew longer, until fifteen sisters had to be employed in teaching the various branches of learning useful to young ladies.

An analogous mark of progress in a different field was the stationing of a priest at Comox, a place on the Island which had hitherto been visited at intervals only. This was one of the first acts of Bishop Lemmens' administration (1889).

Almost a year later, an interesting celebration was attracting a vast concourse of aborigines to a point some forty miles north of Vancouver. In common with the Skwamish of Burrard Inlet, the Sechelt Indians originally formed several villages under as many chiefs. But, emulating the Paraguay missionaries of old, Bishop Durieu had gathered them at a sort of strategic point, a narrow isthmus where most of them were wont to portage goods and canoes, to save many miles of wearisome, and at times dangerous, navigation. The missionary had had the place cleared of the giants of the primeval forest, and made the Indians build comfortable houses with such modern conveniences as were compatible with their circumstances. Thus was the village lighted at night and waterworks established, which involved many a mile of main pipes to reach a lake near the mountain side.

As in a number of other Catholic villages,³ a brass band with gorgeous uniforms for the players

³There are no less than eleven native bands within the southern half of British Columbia alone, all in Catholic villages.

and a commodious stand for the discoursing of sweet music on Sundays and holidays, was established, while pieces of cannon were procured which were destined to celebrate the arrival of the missionary, or enhance the solemnity of the processions of the Blessed Sacrament.

But the crowning glory of the model village was a church 80 feet by 28, with a facade 48 feet wide and two beautiful towers. Commenced October 26, 1889, the building was ready for dedication by the 3rd of June of the following year. With the exception of a white man to direct the work, the construction was the result of the exertions of the Indians themselves, who moreover defrayed all the expenses it entailed, over \$3,000. And to say that when Durieu first landed among those Indians, they went so far as to deny him food and lodging, so that he might not be tempted to give them instruction that would do away with their heathenish rites and customs!

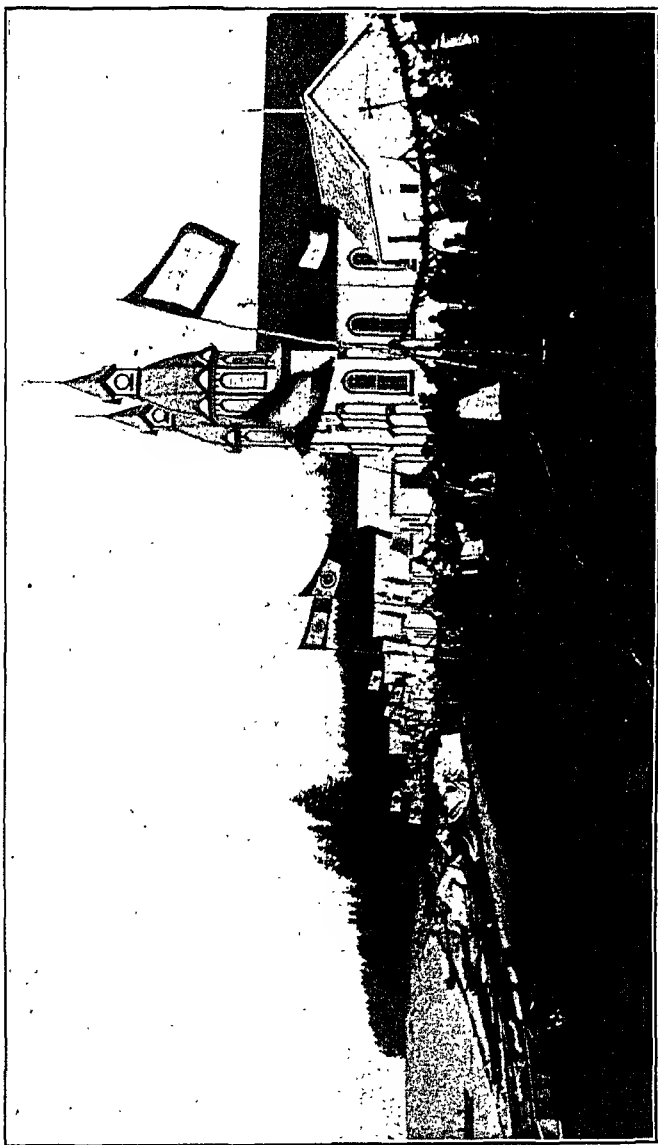
Deputations from over a dozen tribes went to assist at the dedication of the new church by Bishop Durieu. Even far-off Stuart Lake was represented by its missionary accompanied by six stalwart men. To describe the astonishment of the northerners when they heard the pantings of the iron horse and, later on, the thundering reports of the "big guns" (cannon), when they witnessed the display of the fireworks, and listened to the entrancing music of the many brass bands called into requisition for the occasion, would be perfectly impossible. It would

be as useless for us to tarry in a description of the series of religious events which gave food for the minds and hearts of the multitude assembled at the Sechelt isthmus.

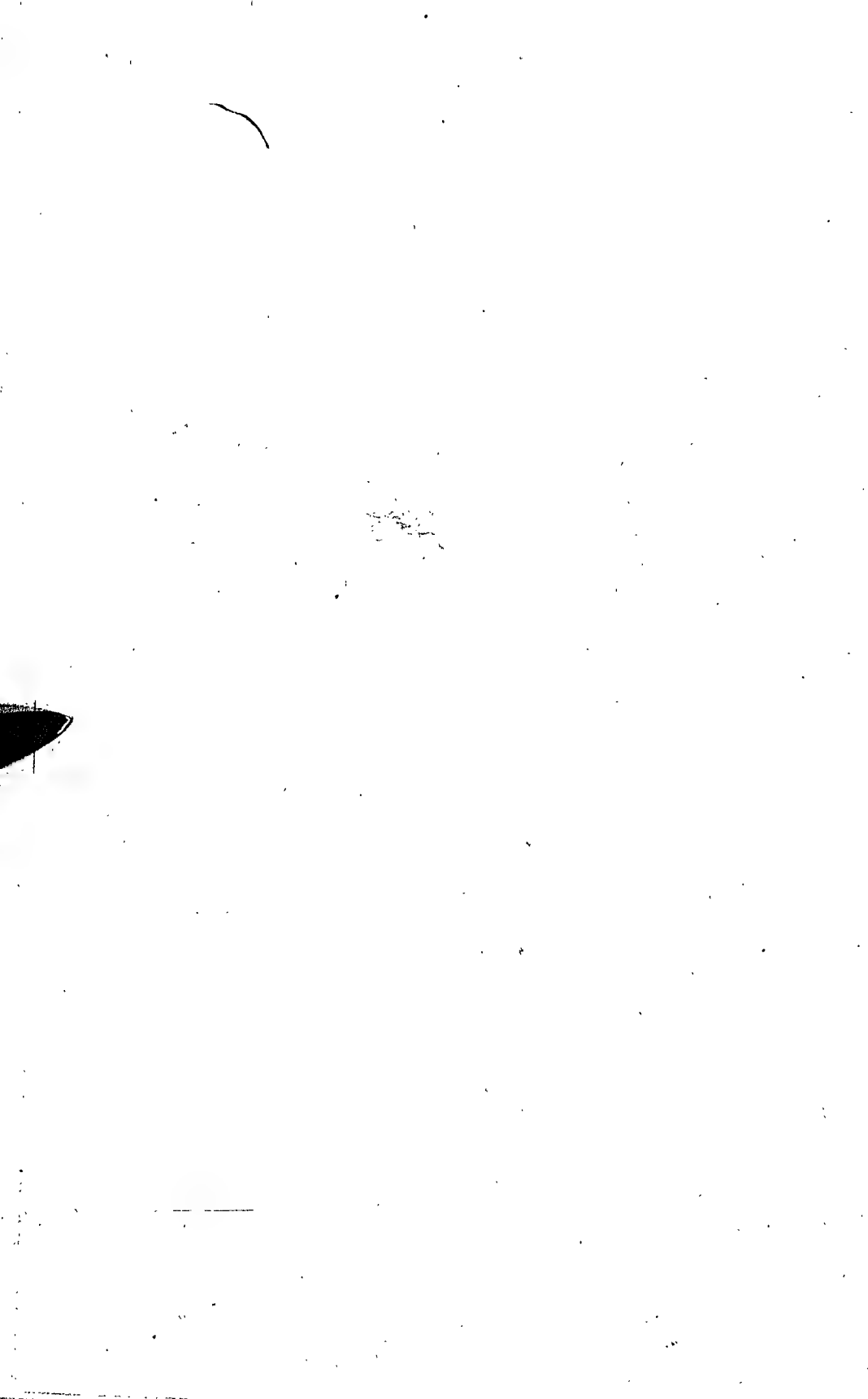
Unfortunately, the festivities were marred by tidings which cast a gloom over all hearts. As we have seen, the venerable head of the diocese had long been ailing. He was already low when his coadjutor had to leave him for Sechelt. Therefore the shock to clergy and pilgrims was proportionately less severe when they heard of his demise, which took place at New Westminster on June 3, 1890.

Most of the missionaries, including Mgr. Durieu and Bishop Lemmens, of Victoria, accompanied by numerous whites and Indians, then repaired to New Westminster, whence all that was mortal of Mgr. D'Herbomez was taken by special train to St. Mary's Mission for interment (June 6th). There lies the first bishop of the mainland in the simplest of graves, under the wild ferns, and among the priests he had directed in their apostolic labours. A prudent administrator and a kind father to pastors and flocks, he was accompanied to the grave by the regrets of all.

Mgr. Durieu became by his demise the Vicar-Apostolic of British Columbia; but he was the same year (September 2, 1890), promoted to the bishopric of New Westminster, in accordance with the request of the First Provincial Council of St. Boniface, of



A CELEBRATION AT SECHELT



which, as we have seen, he had himself been one of the fathers in July of the preceding year.⁴

The new titular was already old and broken down in health when he assumed his new title. Yet his episcopate was remarkable for the expansion of the Church among the new centres of population created by the advent of the Canadian Pacific Railway. By an unfortunate transaction the valuable property of the Okanagan mission passed into strange hands; but new parishes, such as Revelstoke, Greenwood, Nelson, Fernie, Cranbrook and others, were erected among the whites, some of which were entrusted to secular priests.

Nor were the unfortunate and the fallen among those whites forgotten. On May 23, 1890, there arrived from Ottawa three professed nuns of the Institute of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge, commonly called Sisters of the Good Shepherd, who established an orphanage and a refuge for girls in a suburb of New Westminster.⁵

To return to the clergy. On February 6, 1891, Father Pandosy, the founder of the Okanagan mission and one of the veterans of the Pacific province,

⁴The eastern limits of the new diocese were made to coincide with the summit of the Rocky Mountains, instead of the boundaries of the civil Province of British Columbia.

⁵This establishment became, 4th Oct., 1899, the prey of the flames. The orphans were then handed over to the Sisters of Providence, who, in 1901, built for them an extensive and commodious house. In the meantime a much larger establishment, with most spacious grounds, had been erected for the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Vancouver, which was occupied on Sept. 19, 1900. Therein orphans and persons practically of all ages and conditions find a safe refuge with the devoted nuns, who now form a numerous community.

passed to a better life after a very short illness, at a distant camp of Indians and away from all confrères. Then, on May 28th of the following year, Father C. Chirouse, his quondam companion across the American plains in 1847, followed him to the grave. In the course of 1891 Rev. Mr. Nicolaye was appointed to minister to the whites in the vicinity of Victoria, and later on those of Ladysmith, likewise on the Island, were added to his flock. Finally, in March of the same year, an Indian industrial school was established on Kuper Island, diocese of Vancouver Island, which was destined to become quite prosperous. Rev. Mr. Donckel, who had so far spent his whole energies in the pursuance of the spiritual welfare of the Cowichan Indians, was entrusted with its management, which he retained practically to the day of his death.

For 1892 we have to record a very different kind of event, which was as sad as it is unusual in the annals of the Catholic missions in fields others than those of China or Corea. Mention has already been made of the public penances administered by Christian chiefs to delinquent subordinates. When these were caused by breaches of morals and propriety, they came to excite, in later years, the wrath of the unscrupulous whites, who could not help seeing in them an implicit condemnation of their own conduct and an effective barrier against misdemeanour with the native women.

It so happened that, in March, 1892, a certain dis-

solute character among the Indians of Lafontaine, a village perched, as it were, on the top of a mountain, was thus punished by her chief for a grave offence against morals. Father Chirouse, junior, was then preaching a retreat in the neighbourhood. A bigoted official of the British Columbia Government thought this an excellent occasion to vent his hostility to the Church, and express in a tangible manner his disapproval of bodily correction among the natives. He therefore caused Father Chirouse to be arrested, together with the Lafontaine chief and four of his officers; but he soon had to momentarily release his prisoners on the payment by sympathizing whites of a bail set at \$1,000.

Needless to remark that the outrage was the occasion for strong feeling and indignant denunciation among the Indians and the fair-minded whites. Yet something worse was in store for the poor missionary. Accused in New Westminster of having been an abettor to the "assault" of which the Indians were said to have been the perpetrators, he was condemned to one year's imprisonment,* while the principal party received a sentence of six months. But in answer to numerous newspaper articles, petitions and letters from the two Catholic bishops of the province, the prisoners were almost immediately liberated.

Nevertheless there is no denying that the inter-

*Exactly the term that the constable who arrested him told Father Chirouse he would be sentenced to.

ference of the Lillooet bigots was a serious blow to discipline, good morals and order among the native tribes, especially those of the south, whose officers became, naturally enough, averse to courting imprisonment by enforcing village regulations.

On the other hand, though the practice of corporal punishment among the Indians was certainly countenanced, nay encouraged, by the Church on the Pacific, it can scarcely be said to have originated with her. Even in prehistoric times, the natives of several British Columbia tribes resorted to such an expedient in a spirit of atonement for delinquencies. To our personal knowledge this was the case with the Chilcotins, who formerly used to ask for some such penances of their shamans. Likewise, when Father De Smet first visited the Kootenay Indians, in 1840, he was soon aware that among them "every attempt at seduction, either by young men or by adults, was punished by a severe flogging."

To the credit of the same year (1892) we may put, as counterpoise to this indignity, a great meeting of the tribes for religious exercises at St. Mary's Mission, which was attended to by no less than seven bishops, besides several other Church dignitaries and a number of priests from the east. Then also was blessed at Victoria St. Andrew's Cathedral, a beautiful brick building commenced in 1890. It measured 150 feet by 85, and its spire reached 175

¹Letter to Hon. S. F. Talpan, St. Louis, May, 1870.

feet from the ground. It was solemnly opened to public worship on October 30, 1892.

Then, as the results of the existing Indian industrial schools within the province were deemed satisfactory, a similar institution was established in Kamloops, which opened for the first time its doors on April 15, 1893, to the children of the Shushwap Indians. Father Carion had lately been stationed at Okanagan: as his experience of such work surpassed that of any other priest on the mainland or the Island, he was put at the head of the establishment, with several Sisters of St. Ann as teachers.

In the north Father Morice was then, in virtue of special powers, making a tour of confirmation throughout his extensive district, as Bishop Durieu's health did no longer allow him to undertake such a trip as his administering of that sacrament would have entailed (1893).

Meantime the city of Vancouver was growing at a prodigious rate. To meet some of the needs created by the increase in the population, the Sisters of Providence established there, in the course of 1894, a hospital which was prosperous from the days of its inception. Then, with a view to forming an indigenous clergy for the new centres of the mainland, a seminary was inaugurated in 1895, of which Father Emile Bunoz, a worthy priest arrived some time before, became the director. Unfortunately the results of that institution have not been commensu-

rate with the pecuniary sacrifices its maintenance has entailed.⁸

We have now reached the end of the last year within the scope of this work. However, before we bring it to a close, we shall add to the foregoing a few hurried notes on later events which may be considered as landmarks in the ecclesiastical history of British Columbia, embracing a period too near us to allow of the proper developments.

In the first place we might mention the death at St. Joseph's Hospital, Victoria, of the veteran Mr. Mandart. He passed to a better life in the fall of 1896, after over thirty-four years of good labours, mostly in the mission of Sanich.

In June of 1896 there arrived at William's Lake four members of the Institute of the Sisters of the Instruction, a teaching Order whose headquarters are at Le Puy, France. These took charge of the school for Indian girls vacated by the Sisters of St. Ann. The new Congregation has since established itself at New Westminster and at Sechelt.

The year 1896 likewise saw the arrival on the mainland of a young priest, Rev. François Thomas, O.M.I., who soon proved himself by his zeal for the salvation of souls, a worthy successor to his compatriot, Father Le Jacq. He reached New Westminster by the end of September, and arrived at William's Lake on May 17, 1897. Thence he has

⁸It had to be closed in 1909.

ever since attended with marked success to the spiritual interests not only of the Shushwaps, the Chilcotins and the Lower Carriers, but also of the Catholics among the whites of Caribou and district.

Father Thomas hailed from Brittany, the westernmost province of France. From the very opposite part of that country, such as it stood prior to the Franco-German war, came the following year a no less zealous worker in the Lord's vineyard. This was Rev. Victor Rohr, O.M.I., who reached the lower mainland in September, 1898. In April, 1899, he was stationed at St. Mary's Mission, whence he had in charge the Indians of the Lower Fraser, Douglas and Lillooet.

As a result of the strenuous life he had led in the north, Father Le Jacq had long been practically an invalid. He departed this life at the hospital of New Westminster on January 23, 1899.

The venerable head of the New Westminster diocese was now bending under the weight of his prolonged labours in the most arduous fields of the country. Rev. Augustine Döntenwill became his coadjutor, and was consecrated titular Bishop of Germanicopolis on August 22, 1897.

Twelve days before, the Church of Vancouver Island had become for the fifth time deprived of its chief pastor by the death of Mgr. Lemmens in Guatemala, South America. On June 29th of the following year Rev. Alexander Christie succeeded him, only to be transferred in 1899 to the archiepis-

copal See of Oregon City, when the Rt. Rev. Bertrand Orth took his place at Victoria (June 10, 1900).

About the same time (June 1, 1899), death claimed the veteran Bishop of New Westminster, Mgr. Durieu, whose place among the Indians can never be filled. By this sad event, his title and prerogatives passed to his coadjutor.

The Oblate fathers had long before succeeded the secular priest to whom we owe the foundation of the parish of Vancouver. On July 16, 1899, the Most Rev. Ad. Langevin, Archbishop of St. Boniface, laid there the corner-stone of a large church, all of stone, which is the finest religious edifice west of St. Boniface. It was blessed in the early weeks of 1901.

The previous year (1900) the Benedictine fathers established themselves at Cloyoquot, Vancouver Island, where they started an industrial school for the Indians to whose spiritual needs they minister. In 1903 the Marist fathers became a further acquisition, which was so much the more welcome as experience had amply shown that the secular clergy could not, for the lack of recruits, suffice alone for the population of the Island, limited as it may be. The Marists took charge of the parish and mission of Cowichan.

On the 19th of June of the same year, the episcopal See of Vancouver Island, whose official name had so far been more or less of an anomaly in the Church, was changed to that of Victoria, which was

at the same time raised to the rank of an archbishopric, with the diocese of New Westminster and the Vicariate-Apostolic of the Mackenzie as suffragans. The island diocese had so far been a suffragan to the American See of Oregon City; the new arrangement gave it its proper place among the Canadian ecclesiastical divisions.

Then, to be entirely up to date in these notes, we may mention the resignation of Archbishop Orth in April, 1908, and the erection of the Prefecture-Apostolic of the Yukon, with Father Bunoz, O.M.I., as titular, and the country north of the 54th degree of latitude as territory. Finally we see Victoria reverting to the rank of a simple bishopric, while the city of Vancouver, on the mainland, is raised to that of an archiepiscopal See. To the former Rev. Alexander McDonald has been appointed on October 1, 1908.

EPILOGUE

As we close our pages our attention is called to the following remarks in the book of a Protestant clergyman, who was for a number of years missionary to a western Indian tribe: "The Roman Catholic Church has been successful in making converts, but not in civilizing and elevating the Indian. Their ritual is attractive to the Indian mind, and the ceremony of baptism admits them to the Church; but they lack the inspiring influences that flow from the faith in Christ, and the indwelling of the Divine Spirit in their hearts."¹

We fancy that not a few of those who have perused the present work will be tempted to indulge in a broad smile at the expense of the author of the foregoing remarks. For our own part, we wonder whether he has ever heard of those native flowers of Christian holiness known as Catherine Tehgahkwita, Louise Sighouin, and so many others, who shone in savage society as the possessors of heroic virtues, simply because they were blessed with "the indwelling of the Divine Spirit in their hearts." We have always been under the impression that the Catholic Church was very commonly regarded as the great nursery of saints. Of course, one who is still possessed of the antiquated notion that her system chiefly consists in ceremonies cannot be expected to understand this.

Comparisons are proverbially odious, and we are

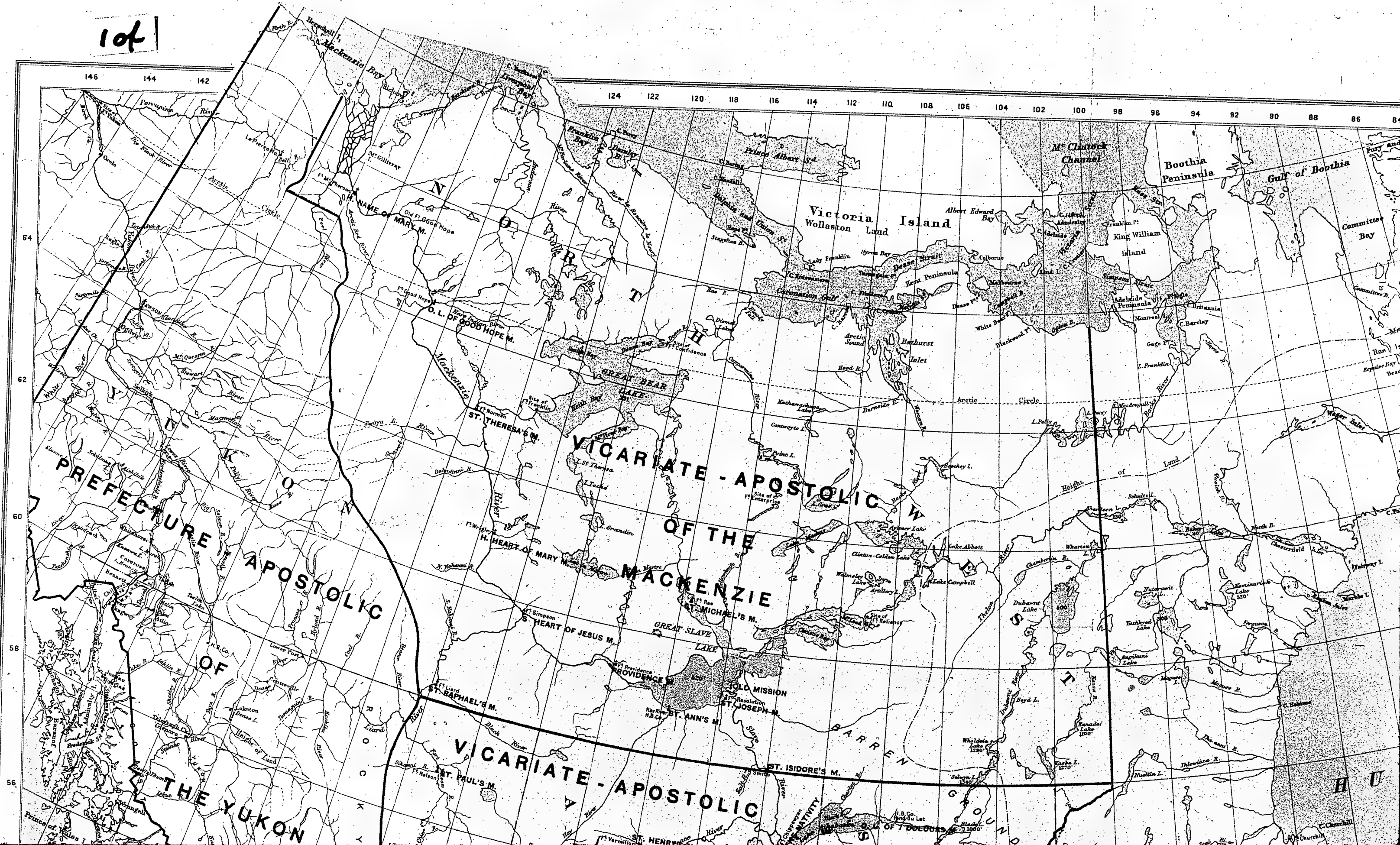
loath to follow Mr. McLean on this ground. In spite of what we personally know of the inner workings of a much vaunted Protestant mission on the North Pacific coast, we are quite ready to give its founder credit for unusual tact and perseverance, which made his people adopt most of the outward practices of our civilization, though their aboriginal laws with regard to land tenure and their social organization—with not a few of the customs derived therefrom—have remained unaltered. We do not speak of their morals: there are blemishes dear to the native heart which only the firing-iron of the confessional can ferret out and destroy.

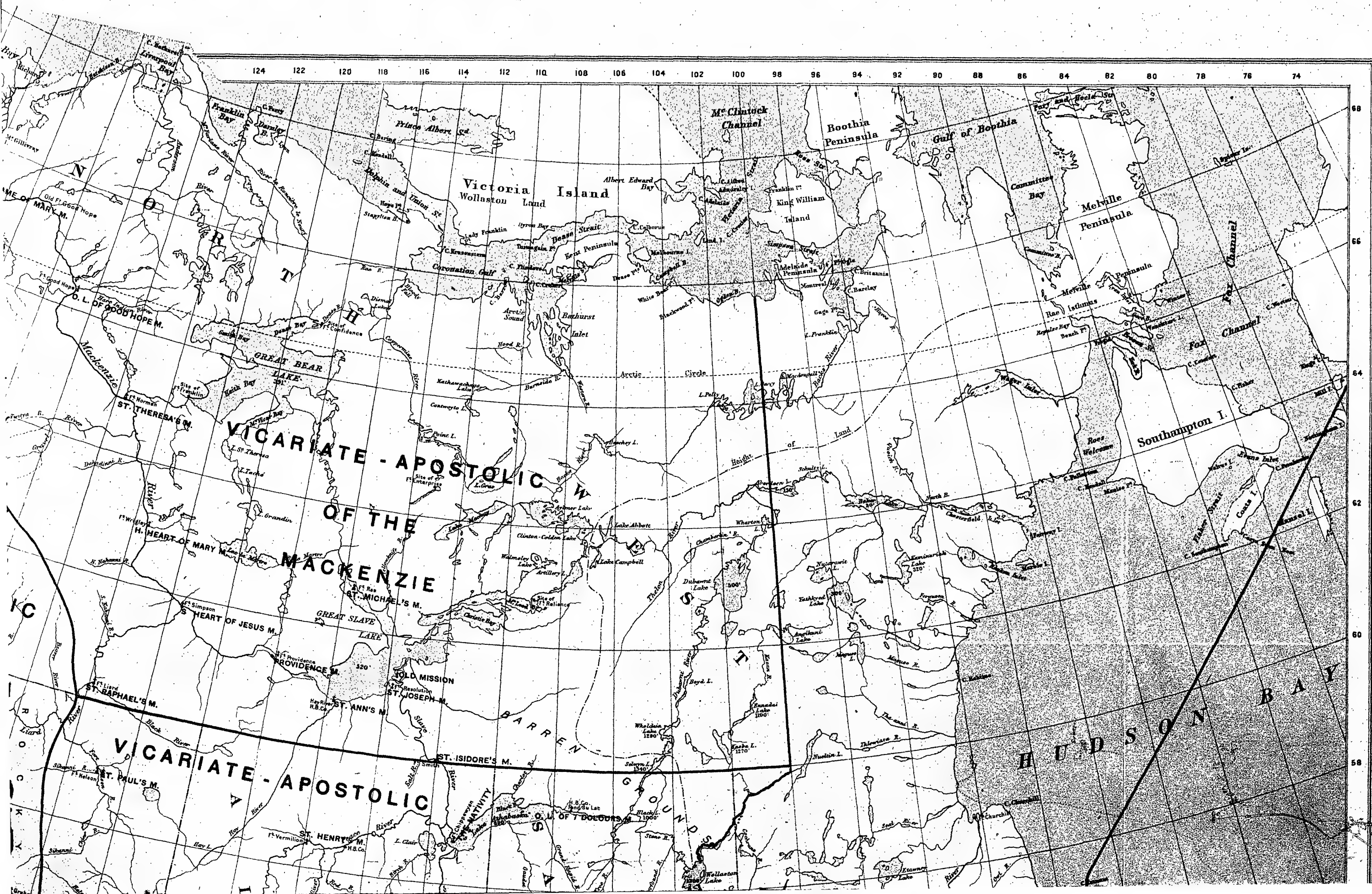
Were we bent on following the above quoted minister in his implicit comparisons, we might retaliate by inviting him to inspect, say, the Sechelt and the Skwamish villages on the sea coast. There, in addition to all the material improvements and outward observances existing at the Protestant mission alluded to, he would find aborigines entirely regenerated from a moral standpoint, not simply bedaubed with a varnish of civilization unequal to the task of hiding from view many shortcomings in the line of Christian perfection. We might refer the author of those unmerited strictures to the noble work of the Ile à la Crosse and so many other missions east of the Rockies. We might quote for his benefit the so flattering appreciation by a Protestant gentleman of the labours of a certain "prince of missionaries" among the natives to the west of the same range of mountains and of their wonderful results.

But *cui bono*? Why insist on a point which so many non-Catholics who wrote from personal knowledge have so clearly settled? In undertaking this work we never expected we should have to defend the Catholic missionaries from possible aspersions on the result of their exertions. We had no thesis to sustain, merely historical truth to establish. Yet we feel that the reader who has gone through our pages with some degree of attention will need no further light to form an opinion on the subject. We imagine that he will as easily answer our parting query: Why is it that, while Protestant laymen in a position to speak are practically unanimous in recognizing the transformation wrought out by Catholic effort among the natives—a transformation which some of their own clergymen admit—the few who cannot see it are Protestant missionaries?

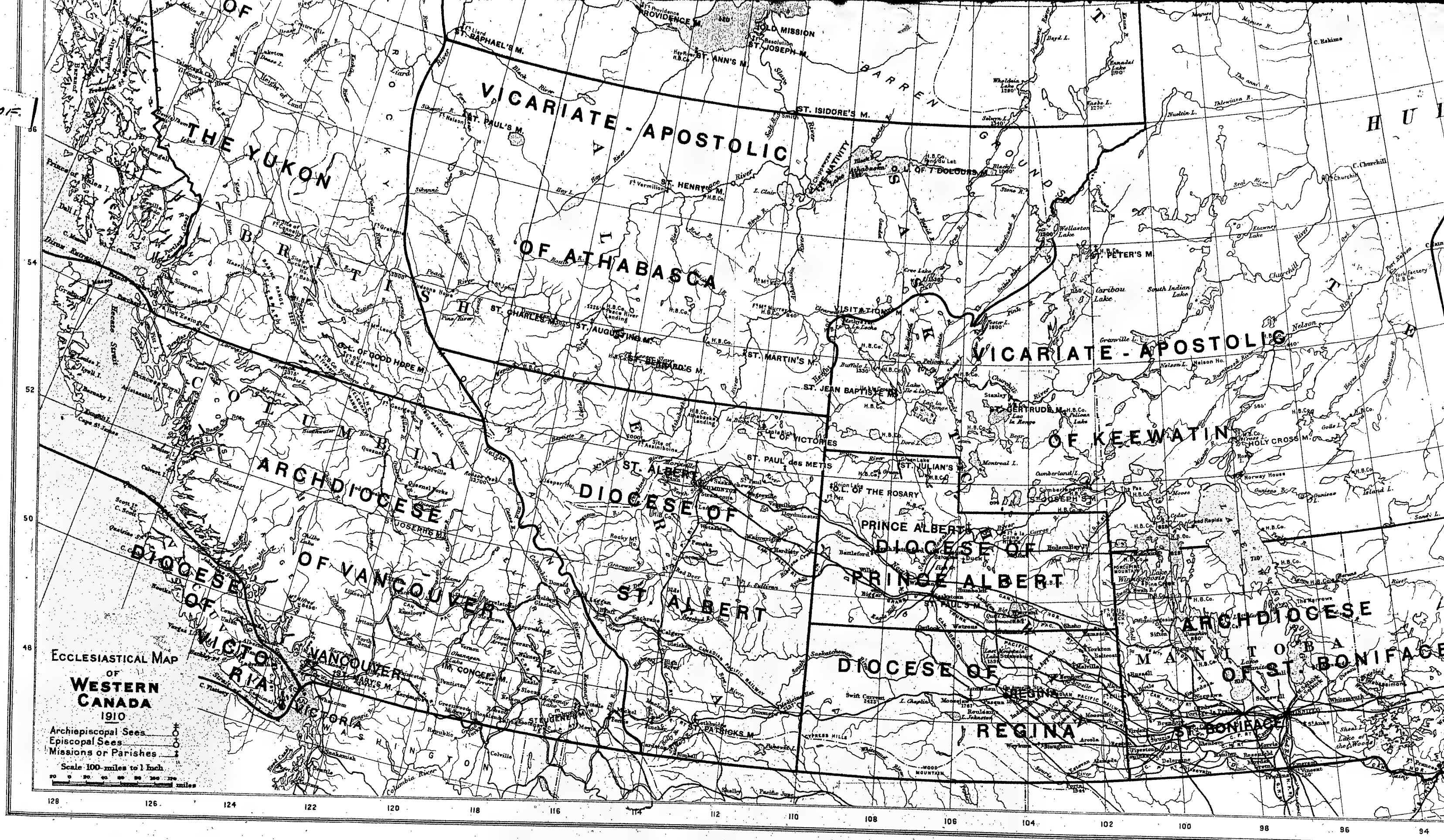
From a recent book by a Protestant explorer we glean the following concerning one of the northernmost tribes: "The Dog-Ribs are very strict in the observance of the outward forms of the Catholic Church. No meal was ever eaten in my presence, during a two months' residence among them, without grace being repeated in concert, and it sometimes required a strong effort of the imagination to see anything to be thankful for. The Sunday-services were very ceremonious functions, which always terminated in a feast when in camp. If travelling, prayers were said before the day's journey was begun. They displayed heroic faith when they knelt in the snows of the Barren Ground to offer up prayers with chattering teeth, shifting their rosaries with half frozen fingers. In their hymn and prayer books they carried from one to a dozen cards and photographs, which, even if they were all perfectly alike, were carefully spread out upon the blanket before their possessor before the service began" ("Explorations in the Far North," by F. Russell, Cambridge, Mass., 1898). If this *heroic faith*, this devotion to Christian practices under such circumstances, do not proceed from the "indwelling of the Divine Spirit," we might be pardoned for asking Dr. McLean what can its origin be. We have always been under the impression that faith, a divine virtue, was a direct gift of God.

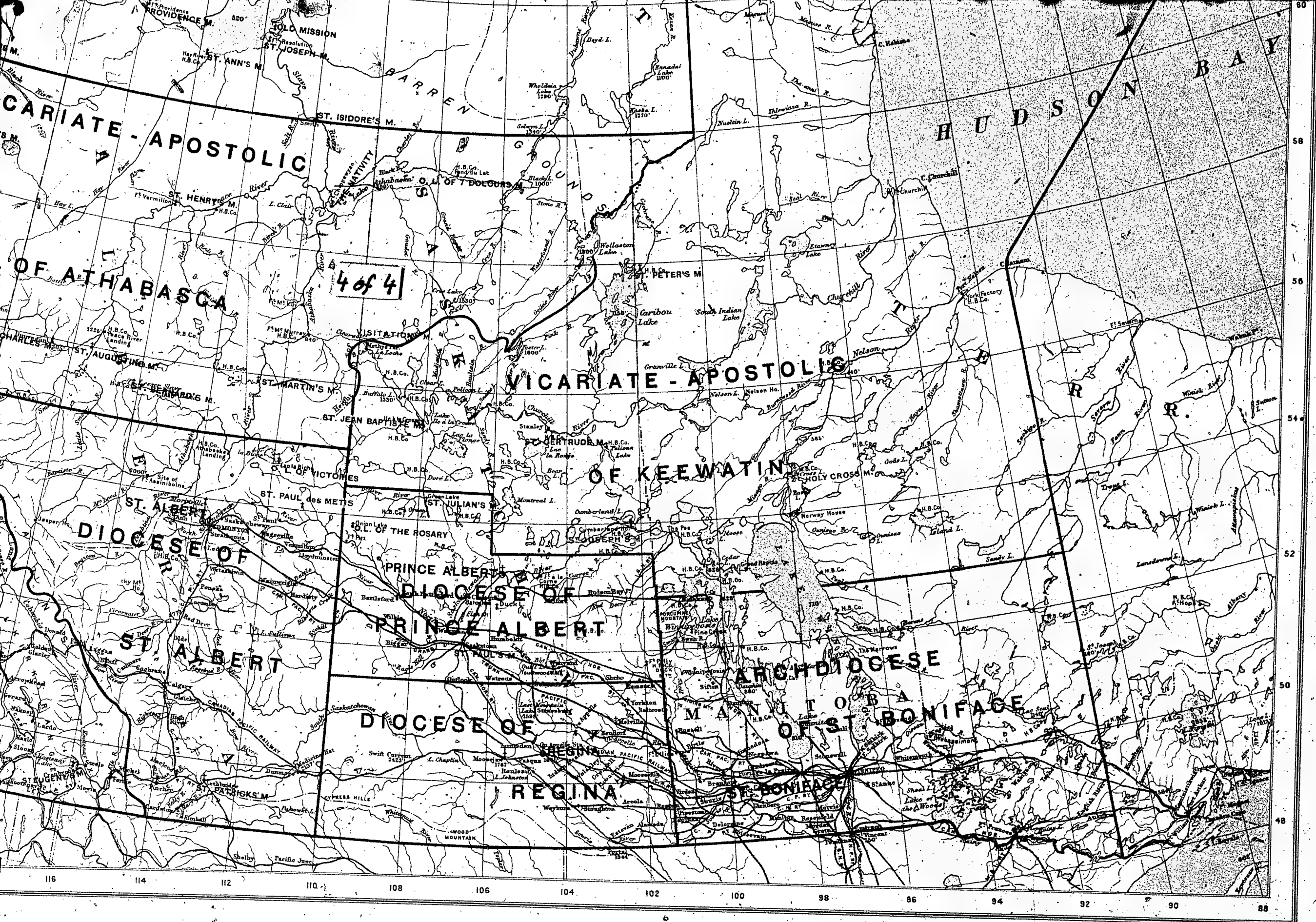
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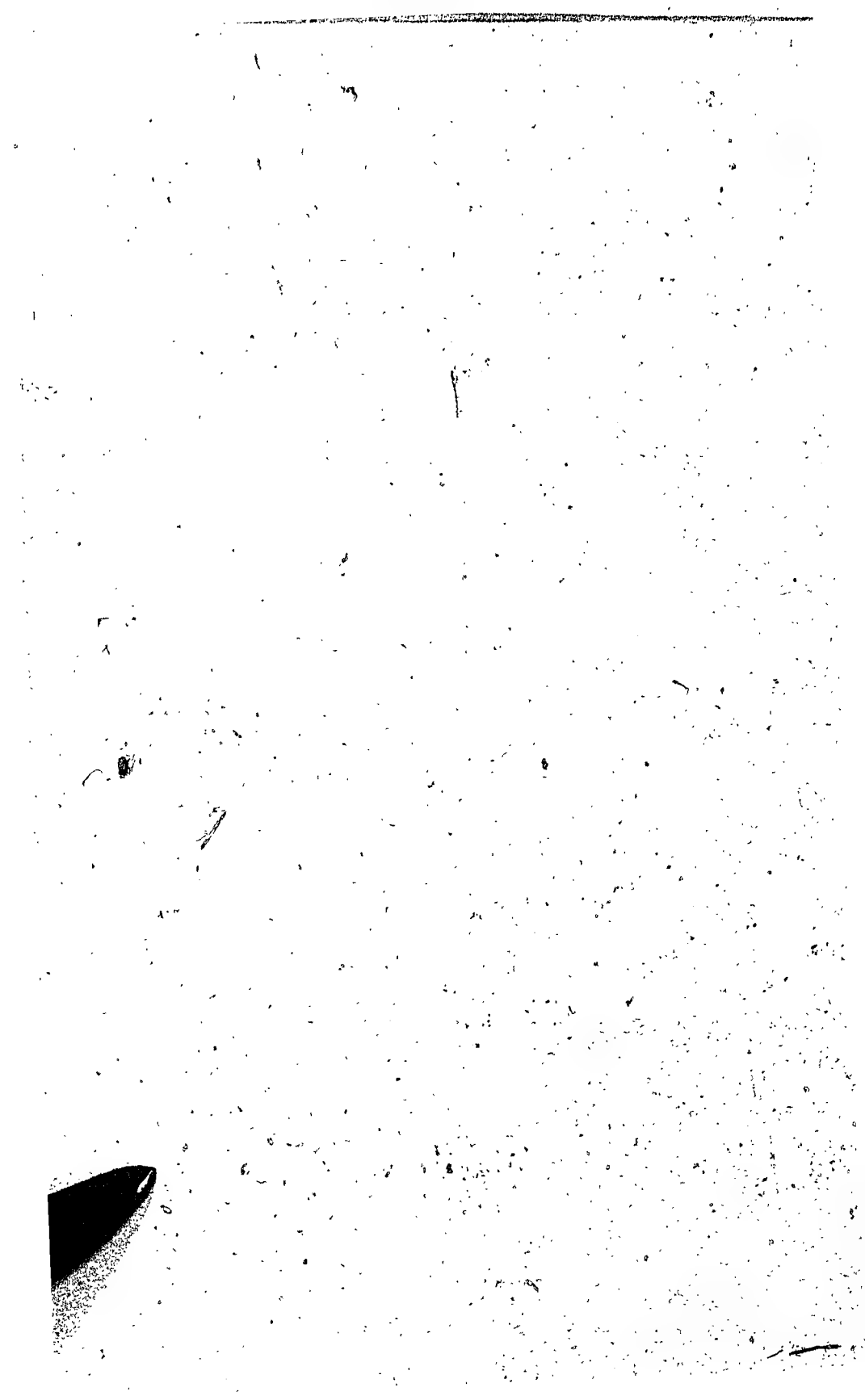




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APPENDIX D.

TYPICAL ERRORS CONCERNING RIEL AND HIS ACTION.

Childhood has inalienable rights to which correspond as many duties for the educator. As an impression received at school cannot be obliterated without difficulty, it stands to reason that anything even remotely offending historical accuracy, as well as morals or religious truth, must be severely banished from the curriculum of the youth's studies. Now here is what we read in a school book "authorized for use in the provinces of Manitoba, Ontario and British Columbia," with regard to the Red River troubles:

"The storm centre was the French half-breed party, the *Métis*, led by Louis Riel. Riel was the son of a white father and a half-breed mother, and had been educated in Montreal for the priesthood. Fluency of speech and magnetism of manner gave him ready control over his compatriots; unchecked ambition and extraordinary vanity blinded him to the folly of resisting the authority of the Dominion. There was no one in the colony to restrain his madness. But for the courage and tact of Donald A. Smith, acting as the agent of the Dominion government, affairs might have taken a worse turn than they did. Archbishop Taché . . . did not return until the frenzy of rebellion had spent itself in murder.

"There was every prospect of a bloodless settlement of the difficulty, when a sudden fit of madness on Riel's part precipitated a tragedy. Among some prisoners whom the latter had thrust into Fort Garry, as enemies of the 'Provisional Government,' was a young Ontario immigrant named Thomas Scott. This unfortunate youth, Riel picked out to be his instrument in terrorising his opponents. Court-martialled and condemned upon the charge of treason, Scott was led out before the walls of Fort Garry and shot. The news of this brutal murder raised a storm of indignation in eastern Canada. A force of seven hundred regulars and volunteers was chosen to proceed at once to

the scene of the rebellion. . . . At the approach of the troops all military ardour and pride of office died down within Riel's breast. He promptly fled from the scene of his transient glory to find a refuge in the United States."

The above is mild in comparison with the ravings of some English writers, on whom Riel's name usually produces the same effect as a red rag on a bull. Yet let us now examine this passage of a book destined for the youth of Western Canada, and count the inaccuracies it contains.

First. Riel's mother was a white woman and not a halfbreed, while his father was not a white man, but a halfbreed. This point, which has nothing to do with racial susceptibilities or sectarian prejudices, is in itself a safe gauge of the care with which some of the school books for the Middle West have been prepared.

Second. Riel's ambition, though not a myth, had certainly limits, since an author who does not tire of deriding him tells us that the halfbreed leader emphatically declared in his presence: "I only wish to retain power until I can resign it to a proper government" ("The Great Lone Land," p. 134).

Third. There was on his part so little folly in resisting the Dominion authorities that this very resistance gained for the country of his birth practically all that he had risen for.

Fourth. Even though Riel had been in need of restraining influences—and a young man of twenty-five can always profit by the advice of older men—it is not correct to say that there was nobody to restrain him, since Mr. Ritchot, Father Lestanc and others were within his reach, and, as a matter of fact, did at times help him by the moderation of their counsels.

Fifth. Donald A. Smith no doubt acted for the best; but having been away at the beginning of the troubles and being a Hudson's Bay Company man, it was difficult for him to see the situation in its proper light. Hence, though, personally, we believe that his intervention had ultimately good results, the rôle he then played has not met with universal approval. (See Geo. Dugas' *Histoire véridique*, pp. 138-39.)

Sixth. We have already seen that there never was a Red River rebellion, and, therefore,

Seventh. Scott's execution, regrettable as it may have been, was not a murder.

Eighth. The sudden fit of madness was not on the side of Riel, but on that of the Portage men, according to the historian Begg ("this ended this *mad-like* expedition"), and any sober mind will readily see that their rising against the only authority then in the country, a government which was recognized by the whole colony and which their own representatives had contributed in forming (since Riel had been elected without the opposition of any of those present at the Convention), must ultimately be held responsible for Scott's fate.

Ninth. The news of his execution did indeed raise "a storm of indignation" in Ontario, but not in Quebec, which lies at least as far east.

Tenth. It is a pure invention and an historical untruth to even imply as plainly does the author of the incriminated school book, that Wolseley's expedition had for object to avenge the death of Scott. It had been ordered before any tidings of the same had transpired in Canada, not to say England, which alone had jurisdiction over the regulars who took part in it. (See our *Aux Sources de l'Histoire manitobaine*, p. 93.)

Eleventh. It is most unfair and historically incorrect to write that "at the approach of the troops all military ardour and pride of office died down within Riel's breast," since the halfbreed leader had never been animated by any such sentiments, but on the contrary had often to wrangle on that very point with his lieutenant O'Donoghue, who was in favour of armed resistance to the approaching force. Gen. Butler's "Great Lone Land" is a work well known in Canadian reading circles, and we have seen it testify to Riel's pacific dispositions; is it honest to thus falsify history and force the dicta of ignorant or prejudiced minds on an unsuspecting youth?

APPENDIX E.

RIEL'S LAST LETTER TO HIS MOTHER.

My dear Mother,

I received your letter of benediction, and yesterday, Sunday, I asked Father André to place it on the altar during the celebration of mass, in order that I might be under the shadow of its blessing. I asked him afterwards to put his hands on my head that I might worthily receive it, as I could not attend Church. He thus had diffused upon me the grace of mass, with its abundance of spiritual and temporal benefits. To my wife, to my children, my brother and sister-in-law and other relatives, who are very dear to me, I say farewell.

Dear Mother, it is the prayer of your eldest son that your prayers and beseechings in his behalf ascend to the throne of Jesus Christ, to Mary, and St. Joseph, my good protector, and that the mercy and abundant consolation of God fill you and my wife, my children and other relatives with all spiritual blessings from generation to generation, in consideration of the great blessing you have poured upon myself; on yourself especially for having been a good mother to me, that your faith and hope, your charity and example be as a tree laden with excellent fruit in the present and the future, and when your last day arrives that the good God may be so much pleased with your pious spirit that He will have it taken up from earth on the wings of the angels.

It is now two o'clock in the morning of my last day on earth, and Father André has told me to be ready for the great event. I listened to him, and am prepared to do everything according to his advice and earnest recommendation. God holds me in His hand to keep me in peace and calmness as oil held in a vessel which cannot be disturbed. I do what I can to keep myself ready for any event, remaining quiet in accordance with the pious exhortations of the venerable Archbishop Bourget.

Yesterday and to-day I prayed to God to reassure you

and send you all sweet consolations. In order that your heart may not be disturbed by anxiety and trouble I am brave and embrace you all with affection. I kiss you as a dutiful son, and my dear wife I embrace as a Christian husband, according to the conjugal spirit of the Catholic union. I embrace you, children, in the breadth of Divine mercy, and my brothers and sisters-in-law and all relatives and friends I embrace with all the good feeling of which my heart is capable.

Dear Mother, I am your affectionate, obedient and submissive son,

LOUIS DAVID RIEL.

Prison of Regina, 16th November, 1885.

APPENDIX F.

RELIGIOUS STATISTICS OF THE FAR NORTH.

The late Anglican Bishop Bompas having written that the number of the Indians under instruction of the Catholic and Anglican communions "may not greatly differ" in the Far North, the author of this work applied for information on this score to Rt. Rev. Bishop Breynat, the present Vicar-Apostolic of the Mackenzie, and received the following reply:

"I cannot give you from memory the exact figures representing the Catholic and Protestant populations of each post of the Mackenzie. But what I shall say will suffice to show you the inaccuracy of Bishop Bompas' assertion. Let us consider successively the missions situated along the Athabasca and Mackenzie Rivers and around the lakes which they cross. Calling each place by its civil name as used by the Hudson's Bay Company, here are the missions attended by Indians who are *all* Catholics, without a single Protestant:

Fort McMurray,	Fort Rae,
" McKay, or Red River,	" Providence,
" Chippewayan,	" des Liards,
" Fond du Lac,	" Nelson,
" Smith,	" Good Hope,
" Resolution,	" Arctic Red River.

"The Church of England has resident missionaries only at Fort Chippewayan, for the whites of that post, and at Fort Hay River, where about half of the population is Catholic;

Fort Simpson, where the same proportion of the people is Catholic;

Fort Norman, where two-thirds of the natives are Catholic; Fort McPherson, where they are all Protestant—about 150.

"We formerly had a mission at that post. To take our good Loucheux away from the fanaticism of their Protestant compatriots, who went as far as to set Father Giroux's house on fire, they have been removed to Arctic Red River, where they number from 140 to 150.

"It must be remarked that the most important posts, of a population varying from 450 to 750 or 800 souls, are: Chippewayan, Fond du Lac, Resolution, Rae and Good Hope. In those places there is not a single Protestant Indian. At Hay River the entire population is about 140; at Simpson and at Norman, from 250 to 300.

"In short, I do not believe that the native population professing Protestantism exceeds 500, if it even reaches that number."

The Catholic Indians and halfbreeds of the Mackenzie are estimated at 11,000 in 1909, and those of Athabasca at 5,000. The Catholic population of the western dioceses is to-day as follows: St. Boniface, 123,000 (of whom about 45,000 belong to the Ruthenian rite); St. Albert, 52,100 (12,780 Ruthenians); Prince Albert, 44,000 (12,000 Ruthenians); Vancouver, 25,000; Victoria, 12,000; Yukon, about 3,500.

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ERRATA

- Vol. I, p. 53, line 11, instead of (1760) read (1763).
 Vol. I, p. 98, line 20, instead of *Charles* read *Jean-Baptiste*.
 Vol. II, p. 6, line 21, instead of *who* read *which*.
 Vol. II, p. 300, line 9, add *Island* to *Vancouver*.
 Vol. II, p. 398, line 11, reference omitted: 'Rev. John McLean,
 "*The Indians*," p. 331. *Toronto, 1889*.

